



BLACKLOCK
PARACLESIS



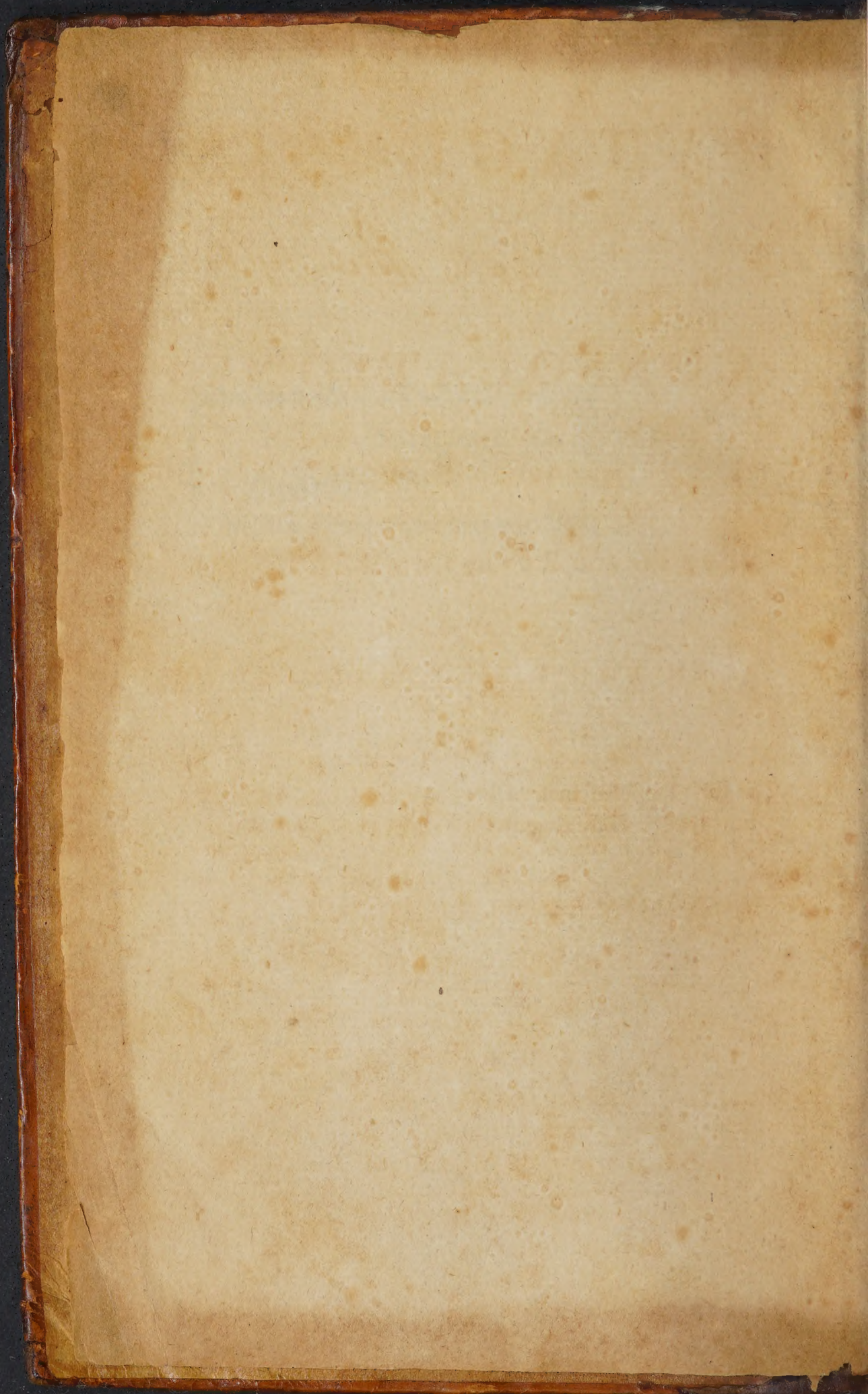




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PARACLESIS;

O R,

Montgomery

CONSOLATIONS

DEDUCED FROM

NATURAL and REVEALED RELIGION:

IN TWO DISSERTATIONS.

The First supposed to have been composed by CICERO;
now rendered into English: The Last originally written

By THOMAS BLACKLOCK, D. D.

EDINBURGH:

Printed for J. DICKSON, front of the Exchange, *Edinburgh*;

AND

For T. CADELL in the Strand, *London*.

M DCC LXVII.

1767

CONSOLATION
FROM
NATURAL RELIGION.

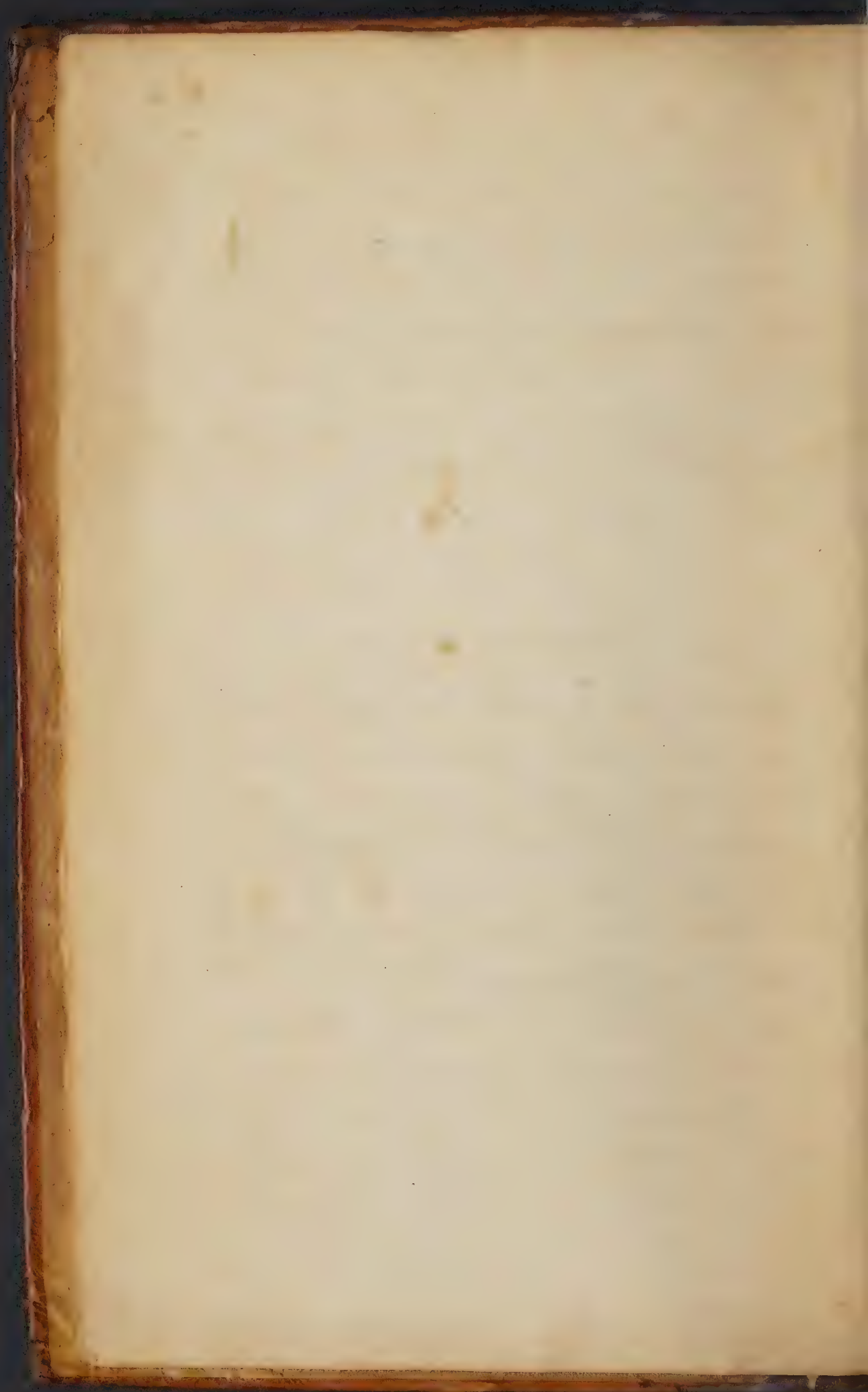
By M. T. CICERO.

Rendered into ENGLISH

By THOMAS BLACKLOCK, D. D.

O vitæ philosophia dux ! ô virtutis indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum ! Quid non modo nos, sed omnino vitæ hominum sine te esse potuisset ? Tu urbes peperisti : tu dissipatos homines in societatem vitæ convocasti : tu eos inter se, primò domiciliis, deinde conjugiiis, tum literarum et vocum communione, junxisti : tu inventrix legum, tu magistra morum et disciplinæ, fuisti : Ad te confugimus ; a te opem petimus.

CICERO, Tuscul. Quæst.



T O

Mr JAMES BEATTIE,

PROFESSOR of MORALS in the Mar-
rischall College, ABERDEEN.]

SIR,

THE following sheets were written at a
time when it became absolutely neces-
sary to lead my mind out of herself. Had I
been so happy then as to have known you, or
could have had an opportunity of conversing
with you, it is more than probable, that nei-
ther the world nor you would have had the
trouble of what is here offered. I am glad,
however, of having it in my power, in this
public manner, to testify my esteem for a per-
son, whose character in the literary world is so
deservedly

DEDICATION.

deservedly distinguished, and whose friendship, though a late acquisition, I shall always reckon one of my most valuable. Give me leave here to return you, and the learned and respectable body of which you are a member, my warm acknowledgments for the late honour they conferred upon me. I am,

S I R,

With every sentiment

EDINBURGH, }
Aug. 10. 1767. }

of esteem and regard

which friendship can inspire,

your most humble servant,

THOMAS BLACKLOCK.

E R R A T A.

Page viii. l. 16, 17. *for* prefence mind, *read* prefence of mind.

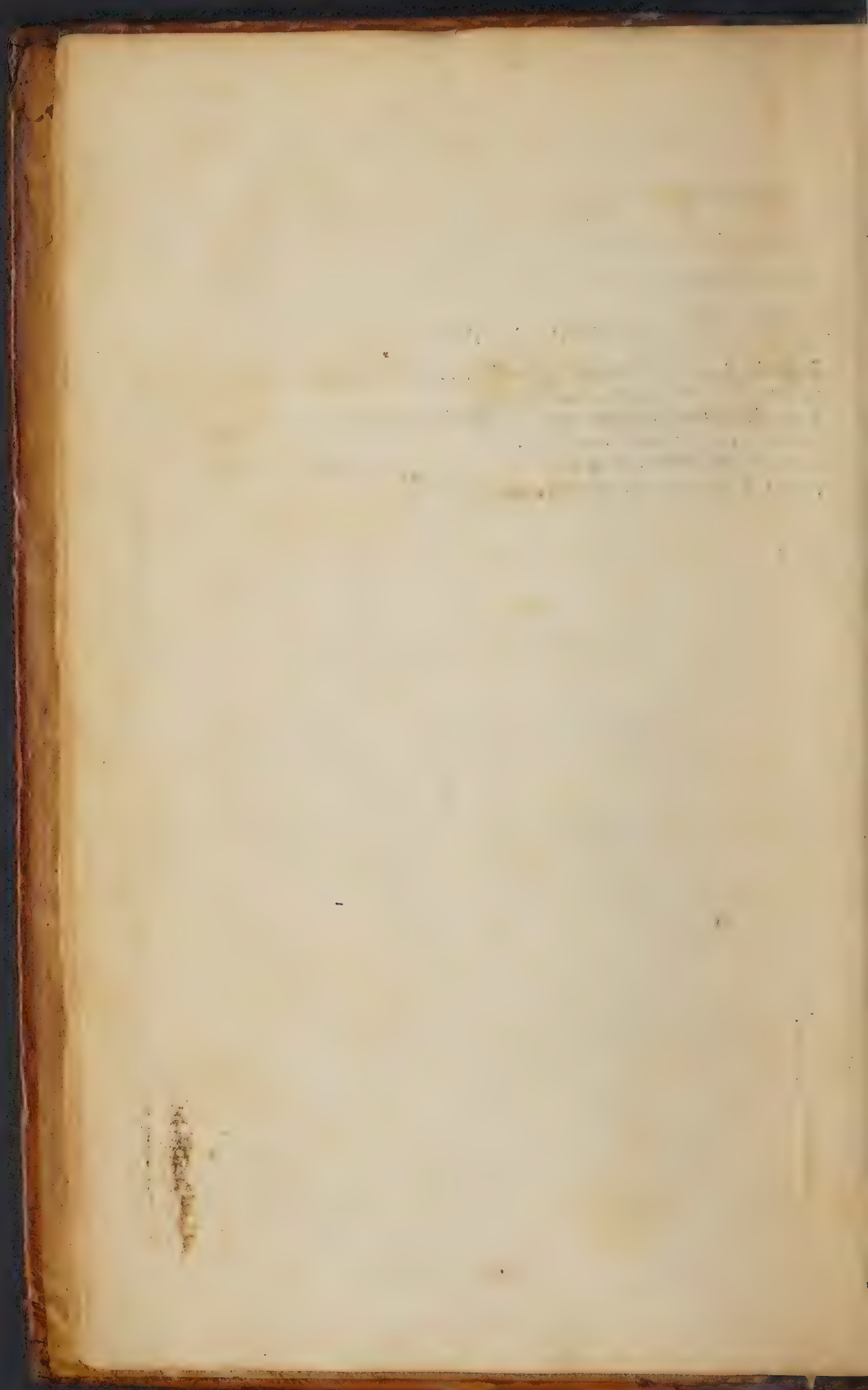
p. xiv. l. 3. *for* perdu, *read* perdue.

p. 11. l. 5. *for* all designs, *read* all his designs.

p. 29. l. 16. *for* men, *read* man.

p. 34. l. 21. *for* no, *read* not.

p. 151. l. 20, 21. *for* veneral, *read* venereal.



R E M A R K S

ON

The AUTHENTICITY of the CONSOLATION
supposed to be written by CICERO;
with the TRANSLATOR'S Motives for
rendering it into ENGLISH, and writing
the DISSERTATIONS subjoined to it:

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

DEAR SIR,

YOU ask me, Whether I think the Consolation now before you was really written by Cicero? what were my motives for translating it? and why I wrote the treatise which is added, attempting to prove, that the afflictions of human life can be no where effectually consoled, but in that account of the divine œconomy which is given us by our Saviour and his Apostles? To these questions I shall answer as distinctly and concisely as possible. But let me first observe, that if the Consolation merit your attention, it is of little importance, by what

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author,

author, or in what age, it was composed. The sentiments which it contains, the examples which it proposes, the design which it prosecutes, and the manner in which it is accomplished, are the only criterions by which the merit of the work can be fairly determined; and if it is found inadequate to the purposes for which it was intended, no name, however respectable, no authority, however venerable, ought to screen it from the censure which it deserves. Dr Middleton, in his life of the real or pretended author, without hesitation, pronounces it spurious; but seems to have imbibed that impression from the critics, on whose opinion he forms his own; yet from their testimony, and that of others, he adds a plan of Cicero's Consolation, minutely agreeable to the manuscript now in your eye. Nor is it less certain, that the fragments of Cicero's treatise, contained in Lactantius, are to be found verbatim in the piece whose authenticity is now questioned. It is natural to imagine, that any original genius, in its attempts to execute the plan of another, would find itself miserably fettered and circumscribed in its excursions. But if the original designer, besides drawing the outlines, had added some particular passages upon the different topics which were to constitute his

his piece, it should seem entirely impracticable for his successor and imitator to adapt these detached sentences, and interweave them with his work, so that its texture and colouring might appear uniform, without being ridiculously variegated, like a piece of wretched patch-work, such as Horace describes:

Inceptis gravibus plerumquè et magna professis,
Purpureus, latè qui splendeat, unus et alter
Affuitur pannus.—————

When, pregnant with vast enterprize, the muse
In boastful phrase some arduous task pursues,
You here and there a purple patch may spy,
Whose glare, obscurely distant, strikes the eye.

But this, in my opinion, is far from being the case with the original Consolation; for concerning the original I would always be understood, when I make observations of this kind. The fragments already mentioned are so naturally inserted, so happily connected with what precedes and follows them, that the whole appears to result from the same uninterrupted current of invention, and to be regulated by the same taste and genius. In a great many passages of the Consolation, where the topics coincide with those treated by Cicero in his dialogue *De contemptu mortis*, the reasoning is precisely the same, and the expression almost iden-

tical. There are a number of sentences, besides the fragments preserved in Lactantius, whose structure is so much in the manner of Cicero, that no filial likeness can be more striking. Yet must it be allowed, that if the Treatise on Consolation be really Cicero's, it is less accurate, and less animated, than many of his other performances: even this however is not sufficient to subvert its legitimacy, because we are well informed how deeply he was afflicted by the loss of his Tullia. So severe, so permanent was his dejection, that he retired to a solitary villa, belonging to Pomponius Atticus, where, in the depth of umbrageous woods and immense forests, he mused in mournful solitude, and deplored, with all a father's anguish, the absent darling of his soul. It is true, that in an epistle to the proprietor of that recess, where he had long indulged his woe, he endeavours to remove the suspicion of his friends, who imagined his spirit irrecoverably depressed and broken in a series of calamities, by urging, that he had neglected no duty, that he had been denied to no person who inquired for him, nor discovered, in any transaction, that irrevocable absence, that unhappy confusion of mind, which are the inseparable concomitants of oppressive sorrow. Still however, if we examine
either

either his conduct, his epistles, or the sentiments of his cotemporaries, we shall be apt to imagine, that these exertions of soul by which he regulated his actions, and preserved his decorum, were violent and uncommon. Nor can we forbear to think, that, during the whole gloomy period, he maintained an incessant struggle with nature, to keep her from sinking beneath the insupportable weight of her distresses.

It may not perhaps be unacceptable to present you with a succinct abstract of a lady's life, who was so dear to her father, whose name he has transmitted to posterity with such veneration and tenderness in his epistles, and whose fate plunged him into that abyss of grief, from whence he endeavoured to emerge, by exerting his mind for its own consolation.

TULLIA was born August the 5th; but in what year, it remains uncertain. She was first married to Caius Piso, a man of great worth and honour, who interested himself in the affairs of his father-in-law with the most strenuous activity, and who wanted neither spirit nor eloquence. It is thought that he expired during the banishment of Cicero, about the year of Rome 696. The following year Tullia was once more married to Furius Crassipes. How she

she was separated from this husband, whether by death or divorce, we cannot, at this period, determine: all we know is, that, in the year 703, she was joined in matrimony with Cornelius Dolabella. This third alliance happened in the absence of Cicero, who then governed the province of Cilicia. His friends, whose information with respect to the state of Dolabella's affairs he had earnestly intreated, were faithless or negligent in the discharge of that office; and he was afterwards touched with the most sensible regret, for consenting to these nuptials, before he had explored with his own eyes the situation of Dolabella's fortune. This marriage was far from being eligible: The man was profligate in his manners, but at the same time so ingeniously wicked, that he effectually deluded both the mother and daughter, notwithstanding his turbulent humour and dissolute conduct, to persuade themselves that he might prove a suitable match. By the tumults which he excited in the city, whilst he was tribune of the people, he wrung the soul of his father-in-law with a thousand vexations. He wanted to establish a law incompatible with justice, destructive of commerce, and pernicious to creditors; for he asserted, that neither personal imprisonment, nor confiscation of effects, should oblige debtors

to

to pay what they owed. And to such a height was this sedition fermented, that M. Antonius found it necessary to bring troops into the city, who attacked the abettors of this insurgent, and killed to the number of 800. In this last marriage Tullia was most unhappy; nor can it be doubted, that her interview with her father at Brundisium was chiefly intended to give her an opportunity of pouring out her soul before him, and of consulting with him what measures were to be taken with a man, whose character rendered him the plague of domestic, and the curse of public life. She procured a divorce from him; yet Cicero treated him with all possible delicacy, till after the murder of Trebonius, when he discharged upon him the whole artillery of his eloquence, with all the force which private injuries or patriot indignation could inspire. In the year 708, depressed with her own, her family's, and her country's misfortunes, she was seized with a languishing indisposition, which succeeded her delivery, and caused that premature departure, so long and so pathetically lamented by her inconsolable father. Her extreme delicacy, universal benevolence, distinguished piety, consummate prudence, singular œconomy, indefatigable activity, profound learning, and exquisite beauty,

are

are not merely supported by the partial evidence of parental fondness, but likewise transmitted to memory by authors who cannot be suspected of those prepossessions.

BUT careless and languid composition is not the sole objection urged by the critics against this performance. They insist, that the author has been most unhappy in selecting his examples of afflicted virtue. But had they regarded these examples in the same point of view with him, they would probably have discovered more candour and modesty in their animadversions. For it is observed in the tract itself, that many of those persons are not recommended as models of human perfection, but as experimental proofs, that it is practicable to retain presence mind, to suppress the throbs of nature, even in the crisis of suffering, and to subdue the strongest efforts of grief. Since, however, we have mentioned the Critics, it may not be improper to give you some notion of their spirit, and of the principles by which they would refute the authenticity of this performance.

THE cry was first opened against it by Antonius Riccobonus, who informs us, That when a Consolation, under the name of Cicero, had been published, having read it, and suspected its authenticity, he wrote his opinion
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of it to Hieronymus Mercurialis, at his own request; in which he thinks it so far from being genuine, that whether he regarded the sentiments or the style, it was neither consonant with the character, nor like the compositions of Cicero; and therefore not only supposititious, but a most injudicious fiction. This letter being published, Carolus Sigonius endeavoured to refute his conjectures in two orations, which, with copies of his own letters, he sent him, written in Italian.

AFTER this follows the letter from Sigonius, with an answer from Riccobonus. Sigonius asserts, that he thought the Consolation Cicero's, because it could be written by no modern. The rest of these two epistles contain only a dispute concerning Aristotle's Rhetoric, of which both of them had published translations, and were consequently competitors for fame; but with this we have nothing to do.

To these succeed M. A. Muretus's letter to Riccobonus, and a great many others both to himself and different correspondents; but they contain no more than general assertions, and can only be regarded as the mere suffrages or authorities of so many men.

IT were endless to repeat the various altercations which passed between Sigonius and his literary antagonist, in a long intercourse of

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letters;

letters; particularly as neither of them enter into the merits of the cause, but content themselves with mutual animadversions, in which they obliquely upbraid each other with want of candour and unfairness of conduct. Riccobonus in particular affirms, that Sigonius, after having declared himself entirely ignorant how the Consolation made its way into the world, could be proved to have introduced it; and further adds, that Franciscus Vianellus had affirmed to him, in the presence of many indisputable witnesses, that Sigonius had intrusted the book to his hands for publication, and that he had actually conveyed it to the world. As the warmth of his temper increases by its motion, and by the numerous and potent auxiliaries who adopted his sentiments, he repeats the charge with augmented ardour. “ In
“ my letter to Mercurialis, and in my three
“ former dissertations, I have not only proved,
“ that the author of the Consolation must be
“ void of literature, and even entirely ignorant of Cicero; but likewise in my fourth,
“ to which Sigonius has not vouchsafed the
“ least reply, I have shown, that he is not possessed of common sense, and in several places
“ contradictory to himself; that he is entirely
“ ignorant of logics, from the weak and absurd
conclusions

“ conclusions which he draws; that he is quite
 “ unskilled in ancient history, from his gross
 “ disarrangement and misapplication of the
 “ times and events concerning which he
 “ treats, and from the weakness he discovers
 “ in exploring the monuments of antiquity;
 “ and that he is not only dissimilar to Cicero in
 “ every thing, but even an absolute novice in
 “ grammar. Sigonius however contents him-
 “ self with answering my former conjectures,
 “ without bestowing one stricture upon my suc-
 “ ceeding arguments, and only offering that
 “ apology for his violated promise of writing
 “ no more against me, which I have translated
 “ into Latin.”

THAT the author of the Consolation is unjustly
 accused, as being generally illiterate, and ig-
 norant of Cicero in particular, the treatise itself,
 and some of my preceding observations, are
 sufficient to demonstrate. The want of com-
 mon sense, and palpable inconsistency with
 which he is upbraided, are imputations no less
 injurious and virulent. There are indeed some
 passages which, to a superficial and prejudiced
 eye, may appear contradictory; as when he first
 seems to argue, that there is no sensibility in
 death, and afterwards, with equal warmth,
 defends the immortality of the soul. But

these are by no means incompatible; since, in the first position, he includes the complex frame of man, as composed of soul and body, which, in that comprehensive view, will be universally allowed not to suffer after its dissolution: In the last he asserts, that the pure and unimbodied spirit still survives, and continues susceptible of painful or pleasing impressions. But though these propositions should be granted irreconcilably dissonant, there is reason to fear that the same objection will lie with equal force against the dialogue *De contemptu mortis*, where the argument is conducted in a manner precisely similar to this. Again, it is not denied by our author, that the paroxysms of a dying frame are expressive of pain, but merely hinted, that, from these expressions, we may imagine much greater agony than is felt.

It was not necessary, either for the illustration or embellishment of his work, that he should have mentioned the persons and events which it contains, in the same series and order of time when they occurred. Such a procedure would have been more like a pedantical annalist, than a philosopher, and an orator. How these historical anecdotes are applied, and whether his conclusions are logically drawn, you must judge for yourself. If the virtuoso who composed

posed this formidable indictment was capable of detecting the author in such a number of obvious grammatical blunders, his skill in philology must have been superior either to his honesty or good-nature. Inexpressible and incomprehensible is the loss which the republic of letters must have sustained, when all-devouring time swallowed, in his relentless vortex, the faithful depositories of this momentous controversy: Yet this, I fear, has been their fate; for though I have sought both for the pieces mentioned by Antonius, and for another on the same subject, written by Joannes Guilielminus, with as much diligence as if they had deserved to be read, yet they have hitherto eluded my keenest scrutiny. Sentiments of J. Lipsius, however, shall immediately follow these, who writes thus to Christopher Plantinus:

“ I HAVE seen, my dear Plantinus, a new-
 “ coined book, which Italy substitutes as a pro-
 “ duct of antiquity. Do you ask what is my o-
 “ pinion of it? I see nothing in it, except the
 “ title, which can attract the reader; for Cicero
 “ is named as its supposed author. Induced by
 “ this very circumstance, I can truly say, that I
 “ read it with avidity. But at my first perusal
 “ it displeased me; a second rendered it contemp-
 “ tible.

“ tible. But who is this mock-orator, this
 “ mincing Momus, who hoped that he could lie
 “ *perdu* under the shade of a character so vene-
 “ rable? Surely he must have formed a wretched
 “ idea of our age. For what can be more unlike
 “ the pure gold of Cicero, than this saturnine
 “ composition? He has not even talents to con-
 “ stitute him the ape of Cicero; not a feature,
 “ not a manner the same. In his plan and inven-
 “ tion, he has selected the most trite and com-
 “ mon sentiments; in his phraseology, the imita-
 “ tion is childish and despicable. Nowhere is
 “ there any thing of nerve or spirit; not even the
 “ complexion of his original has he been able to
 “ copy, with all his clumsy-daubing of varnish
 “ and false colour. But would you have me ex-
 “ plore it a little deeper, to preserve our young
 “ students from the illusion? We must however
 “ be short; for once more to read it over, or even
 “ to pay it the compliment of a cursory glance,
 “ is a penance which I have neither patience nor
 “ fortitude to endure.

“ The introduction itself is detached and in-
 “ consistent; and in the turn of his periods the
 “ members are intolerably disproportioned and
 “ distorted; a vice peculiar to himself, and dif-
 “ fused through the whole piece.”

To these general observations, our exquisite
 critic

critic has added severe strictures upon particular passages ; some against the impropriety of the language, others against the composition: but I should be sorry to injure his memory by exposing his ignorance, ill-nature, and vanity, in rehearsing them. Yet to give you a taste of his talents, we shall add one or two of them.

THE author of the Consolation speaking of his country, adds, " That he would willingly have purchased its freedom at the expence of his dearest blood." Upon which Lipsius remarks, with equal triumph and felicity, " That he might have spared himself the vast expence of this expensive phrase."

THE same person recapitulating the evils to which man is obnoxious, adds, " It is wonderful, that thus involved in calamities, he should not abandon himself to despair." Upon which take the learned animadversion of Lipsius, " It would be wonderful (says he) if you paid the least attention either to yourself or your words; but it is still more wonderful that I do not abandon you."

SPEAKING of the departed lady, for whose loss he endeavours to console himself, he adds, " That she had deserved the highest acknowledgments from him, and from her country." Here Lipsius is in a mighty rage. Pregnant with the idea
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of a blundering school-boy, his hand seems to itch for the rod, that he might take immediate vengeance. "Is this (says he) suitable to a female character? Did Tullia merit the highest praises from her country? What! Tullia, Tullia indeed! Begone boy."

THERE is only one more which merits our attention. In the Consolation it is asserted, That a temple has been vowed and dedicated to Tullia. "Vowed (says the critic) if you please, but never dedicated; for it is not easy to consecrate an edifice before it is built." Yet when Cicero's imagination was warmly interested in the subject, there can be no great absurdity in thinking that he spoke by anticipation, and supposed already done what he immediately intended to do. Had he been engaged in some cool and dispassionate research of philosophy, the observation might have had some force; but when the circumstances of the author are considered, it may still be questioned, whether this start of sensibility is sufficient to refute the authenticity of a work, written upon the same plan, and containing the same sentiments with that of Cicero. Before we have done with this ostentatious critic, it may be worth our pains to observe the sentiments

ments of his cotemporaries concerning his own compositions.

PHILLIPUS PAREUS, a man who was extremely skilled in Roman literature, thought he did his father much honour in publishing the contempt he had discovered for that new and desultory style which Lipsius had exhibited to the public. "He had (says Pareus) a sovereign contempt for that new form of expression which Justus Lipsius, otherwise a man of consideration, has obtruded upon our age, and which the servile herd of imitators have strenuously attempted to copy, but with unequal success."

HE likewise relates the opinions of Jacobus Pontanus and Marcus Velferus, upon the same style.

"We admire (say they) and applaud the excellent genius, and consummate learning of J. Lipsius; nor do we find any who has better deserved our acknowledgments in literary researches: yet from the numberless solecisms, and affected heterodoxy of his diction, for many and important causes, as I think, we fly with abhorrence." I have heard with my own ears M. Velferus acknowledging the warmest friendship for Lipsius, yet he would rather chuse to follow Muretus than Lipsius in writing. So highly did he admire the genius and

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erudition

erudition of this author, whilst, at the same time, he justly detested his unprecedented, unnatural, and affected style. Lastly, he adds, that Scaliger, when just ready to expire, discovered his aversion at this ostentatiously-laboured manner of expression; who now, in the last struggles of departing life, (when writing, as Hyenius says, to Isaac Casaubon), inveighed, with peculiar bitterness, against this wretched habit, this new corruption of language. For thus Hyenius writes concerning him: "He
 " was accustomed violently to condemn the
 " affectation of J. Lipsius in his style, particu-
 " larly in these works which were the products
 " of his advanced life; and he often read his
 " letters with indignation; in which I know,
 " for certain, that his opinion agreed with
 " your own."

THUS having delineated the opinions of the Critics against the authenticity of the Consolation, so far as they occurred to me; and having likewise shown what regard they appear to deserve, let me only add, that though the translation was never intended for a servile and literal version, it has yet been executed with as much fidelity as possible. But my chief care has been, not to preserve the phraseology and idioms of the original, but to transfuse, as naturally and easily as

I could, the spirit and sentiments of the author into English: How successful this attempt has proved, it is yours to determine.

HAVE I not now quite exhausted your patience? or do you still insist that your last questions shall be categorically answered? If so, let me inform you, that my motive both for translating the first, and writing the last treatise on Consolation, was to support my own mind, which, for a number of years, besides its literary difficulties, and its natural disadvantages, had maintained an incessant conflict with fortune. It was therefore to alleviate the pressure of repeated disappointments, to sooth my anguish for the loss of departed friends, to exclude the rage of implacable and unprovoked enemies, that I endeavoured to abstract my mind from a situation which, at that time, appeared equally wretched and hopeless. For thus, whilst my constitution was almost irrecoverably shocked by a rapid succession of severe misfortunes, I kept my internal powers awake and active, without either languishing to insipidity, or precipitantly rushing to despair. But finding all the aids of unassisted reason too weak to stem the torrent of evils which threatened to overwhelm me, I felt it necessary to explore a quicker relief, whose o-

perations might be more powerful, and whose basis might be more solid. In this view, the Christian religion expanded all the treasure of her benignity to my afflicted heart: As a solitary traveller, wandering through the burning sands of Lybia, surveys at length a cool and limpid stream to quench the intolerable fever of his thirst; such was the heavenly prospect presented to my bewildered soul. I approached, I tasted, I was in a great measure restored. Thus blessed with chearful acquiescence in the general destiny of things, and in my own in particular, it was natural for me to wish, that others who felt the same disease, might participate the same remedy; and to flatter myself, that such considerations as had produced this agreeable change in my own heart and understanding, might, in some degree, operate a similar effect upon others. The reason why this discourse was modelled as it now appears, will not protract your attention much longer. I had a view of selecting a society of young gentlemen, in a particular place where I resided for some time, that I might stimulate their intellectual powers in pursuit of truth, and prepossess their young hearts in favour of religion: though this design proved abortive, yet I finished the discourse which was intended to be delivered to them,

them, and now consign both to the world as you see them. What reception they may find from taste and learning, is neither within the sphere of my knowledge, nor the object of my concern. If these imperfect essays are in the least successful, in soothing the pangs of distress, in directing the anxious researches of understanding, in confirming the peace, or improving the piety of an ingenuous heart, these effects will amply reward the labours of

Your most obedient

and most humble servant.

EDINBURGH, Aug. 26.

1767.

CONSO-

Handwritten text, likely a list or index, with several lines of script. The text is faint and difficult to read, but appears to be organized in a structured manner, possibly with headings or subheadings.

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CONSOLATION

O F

HUMAN LIFE,

Supposed to be written by CICERO, upon
the Loss of a DAUGHTER.

THOUGH the wise forbid the application of remedies to the mind when hurt by recent misfortunes; and though, in human life, no event, however adverse, should appear surprising or unexpected; yet let me try (if by any means I can) to cure myself, and support my own mind, while tenderly sensible of a domestic calamity. For if, as often as they happen in the course of things, we naturally endeavour to console the misfortunes of others, why may we not apply the same lenitives to our own? And if we have sustained those evils with some degree of patience and dignity, which human efforts could neither avoid nor prevent; why should we not, if possible, by a proper application of our rational powers, render such afflictions more tolerable?
particularly

2 CONSOLATION FROM

particularly since men ought to exert themselves with greater vigour and assiduity in removing every anxiety and vexation, in proportion as a life of tranquillity is preferable to disturbance and care; at least, such a conduct must be more eligible, than for one depressed with torment, or involved in misery, to make human life, (though sufficiently wretched of itself) still more miserable, by inconveniencies which do not necessarily attend it. Besides, what can be more excellent, what more useful, than, when the corporeal frame is found in a proper state, to endeavour that the mind may likewise preserve her native tranquillity and force? For if the mind be necessary to the body as director, such is the body to the mind as an instrument. But the mind when disturbed is far from being in a condition to govern, and the body when disordered is by no means qualified to obey her commands: The learned and wise therefore, who have formerly written against the immoderate indulgence of sorrow, may be justly admired, both for the prudence of their undertaking, and the humanity of its execution.

Of these benevolent fages many pieces are still extant, justly valued for the wisdom of their compositions; particularly those of Theophrastus, Xenocrates, and Crantor; whose books
were

were so full of salutary precepts, and whose style so correct and happy, that though I often took them in my hand, at first only to sooth my mind, admiration of these fine qualities, together with the smarting sense of a domestic calamity, at last irresistibly led me to read them. For the misfortune of having lost a daughter, whose lovely image was for ever impressed on my view, (as wisdom and virtue conspired to adorn her with every thing that was laudable), so much struck, or rather so much afflicted me, that in order to sooth or mitigate my grief, it became necessary to have recourse to those for assistance, whose learning and authority had before been most prevalent with me. It is therefore my design, to collect from them such sentiments as appear either wisely conceived or elegantly expressed, that by these my regret may be softened; that if I cannot allay the same uneasiness in others, which I have sometimes before attempted both in speaking and writing, perhaps not without success, yet these efforts may prove, in some measure, effectual to myself. And in this enterprise I shall exert greater fortitude than others, who, entirely free from affliction themselves, find it less difficult to comfort the miserable, and restore them to chearfulness. For thus I, though
D deeply

4 CONSOLATION FROM

deeply affected in my own heart, shall by that very exertion of mind, which is found necessary in pursuing consolation for myself, conquer the grief which I endeavour to sooth, and, by changing the object of my attention, impress that force upon nature which is requisite to overcome her resistance, and change her bias. And I wish these attempts may be so effectual, as to teach others, in similar circumstances, how they may bear adversity with patience.

THIS, the oftener it happens, must be reckoned so much more incident to human nature, nay almost created with us, and necessarily implied in our frame and circumstances, which ought to render it more supportable. For if any one acknowledges himself to be a member of the human system, and claims the appellation of *man*, how should he dare to refuse the conditions and accidents natural to his species? Such a conduct would immediately subject him to the imputation both of folly and injustice. This topic is ingeniously and politely treated by Theophrastus, as well as Xenocrates, both of whom accuse of folly and injustice such as discover impatience at the ordinary contingencies of life; and one of them, without scruple, pronounces such characters adverse to the Gods themselves. The crime implied

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implied in this behaviour is atrocious; and scarce tolerable in a man, who may be justly esteemed, like the giants, to rebel against Heaven, if, instead of gratitude to the immortal Gods for all favours, from whom he possesses existence, activity, and reason, he shall proudly oppose their will, and accuse their administration.

BUT these things, as I have already said, are judiciously treated by a great number. I chuse however to follow Crantor, whose short, but truly valuable dissertation, I have read; which, according to Panætius, should be repeated verbatim; and in which, every remedy against grief is perspicuously and elegantly comprehended. He has enumerated the misfortunes of human nature with so much diligence and accuracy, that one would imagine mankind born, and introduced to their present scene of existence, that, by sufferings, they might atone for the crimes of some former state.

FOR suppose mankind born and introduced to the present theatre, immediately you shall recognise, not the original of a being intended to possess and govern inferior natures, but of one destined to be the slave of every inconvenience and misery. For in every period while the infant rises to the boy, his hours are con-

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fumed in tears, complaints, tenderness, impotence of mind and body, with a thousand other pains and hardships.

IN youth we are seized with a feverish ardour peculiar to that season, neither capable of reason nor reflection; spurning with contempt every thing that is beneficial or praise-worthy; eager in pursuit of sensitive pleasure, and frequently of the most fordid vices; ignorant of real good; cruel to equals, impatient of superiors, and insulting to those of lower rank: from whence flow competitions, altercations, affronts, and, in short, an uninterrupted series of vexations. From contempt of honourable pursuits, arise misery and infamy; from fordid enjoyments, greedily pursued and attained, spring pains, diseases, and, in fine, eternal self-disapprobation, aggravated by an intolerable sense of those bitter consequences that inevitably attend guilt and baseness. Add to these, a mad prodigality of money, carelessness of futurity, forgetfulness of want, indifference to the welfare of children, of wives, of family, and posterity.

IF any one would call these *the vices of that immature age*, rather than *the misfortunes of nature*, he will not, by disputing the propriety of a name, change the state of things, nor remove

move these very evils or uneasinesses from mankind. Neither must we listen to him, who would separate these from the misfortunes natural to our frame, because they are only the errors of individuals, or at most of a few; whereas he affirms nothing natural to man, unless what is essential to all the particulars of the kind. As if truly anger were not natural to man, because there are some who seem not to resent; and as if social intercourse and conversation were unnatural, because there are numbers found, who do nothing with more reluctance, than entering into company and interchanging discourse. But they will appear plainly miseries natural to man, if we only consider, that though all of them are not found in any one; yet certainly they are all recognised in the species, some of them in a great many, and frequently a number of them in the same person.

AGAIN, in our more fixed state of life, it is not difficult to understand, but scarce practicable to particularize, either the different kinds or quantities of misery to which we are subjected. For this, of all the stages that complete the life of man, is most obnoxious to disturbing passions, to imminent dangers, to the loss of fame and fortune. Because as this, amongst

mongst all the other periods of our life, is the fittest and most proper both for transacting private affairs and public negotiations; so this alone, in a degree superior to all the rest, partakes, if not sustains, the whole aggregate of pains and perplexities, which arise either from the administration of public or private business. It is now that we engage in the service of our friends; it is now that we are invested with offices of state; it is now that we acquire glory and advantage from the prosperous issue of our affairs, or are involved in calamity and disturbance by their ill success. It is the task of these years to defend and patronise such members of the community as merit its regard; it is likewise their task to accuse and depress such as deserve its animadversion. On these years descend the effects of emulation and jealousy, even from men of some desert; and on these years, the designing and perfidious practise their fraud, and inflict their malice. It is an age always hostile to itself, always involved in tumult, always oppressed with labour, always tormented with anxiety and solicitude; an age which, if it had not at least some few intervals of advantage and pleasure, would neither be capable of regulating its conduct, nor supporting its pain.

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BUT the number of its miseries is still much greater; so great indeed, that they are sufficient to deter any man from public negotiations. Of this my late calamity afforded a most conspicuous example to the whole state; a calamity in which I was involved for procuring and ascertaining the safety of my country, for defending every sacred and civil right, for rescuing the Roman commonwealth and people when a prey to traitors and murderers. But the unhappiness was mine; my countrymen obtained security and rest, which, had it been necessary, I would have purchased with cheerfulness at the expence of my dearest blood. — But I need not here expatiate on any thing to my own commendation. This, however, truth permits me to affirm, that in these years which were spent in procuring any considerable utility or embellishment to my country, in these I truly lived. And if my life were still protracted, no other cause, but my regard and care to promote public happiness, could induce me to continue it; for the love of public happiness is the most glorious and laudable sentiment that can adorn a rational creature.

AND now why should I enumerate the pains and infirmities of old age, the latest period of human life? The word itself, which implies
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the whole idea of sickness and vexation, the very sight of an old man, sufficiently discover how numerous and severe the torments and uneasinesses are which attend that helpless state. For what other notion do we naturally feel from the view of an old man, trembling, weak, and infirm, covered with hoary hairs, and reclining beneath the pressure of age; what but the idea of a miserable creature, dead to all the enjoyments of life, and alive to all the agonies of death? And though old age may appear to some as deriving no small consolation from its prudence acquired by former experience, which indeed is its peculiar characteristic; yet these very persons must confess, that a number of the griefs and diseases attending old men flow naturally from the same source. For will not any one who finds himself prudent and skilful in transacting affairs, naturally regret the weakness of that age, which prevents his accomplishing, in the best manner, what he so well understands? And if he is passionately fond of his country, will he not feel real anguish, that he cannot prosecute its glory and advantage, as well in scenes of active life, as in those of counsel and deliberation? The uneasiness of wise men is likewise much increased, by their consciousness that the most salutary plans can
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have no good effect, unless conducted in the properest manner to their issue; and that unless his instruments be men of wisdom and probity, men whose darling object is the interest of their country, all designs will prove vain and abortive.

THESE observations on the different periods of life seem sufficient. What then shall I say of its different ranks? Or can it be denied, that infelicity is equally distributed amongst the highest, middle, and lowest stations?

FOR how unhappy even kings themselves must be, to what fatigues, fears, anxieties, and snares they are obnoxious, Dionysius sufficiently showed, when he caused Damocles to try how far his fortune deserved emulation, with a sword impending over his neck. Nor is it surprising, whilst they are threatened with all the distresses of war, the devastation of their territories, the slaughter of their subjects, and the destruction of their cities. These events, when they happen, always add something to the glory or dominion of the conqueror; but the consequence is generally so much destruction and expence, that the victory is more than balanced by the loss; and, for the most part, both the contending powers would have found it better not to have taken arms. But if a re-

pulse of the army, or any defeat, should happen, nothing can be conceived more unhappy than such a situation; since it is joined with captivity, sorrow, scorn, and want. But suppose a king, free from all the attacks and hardships of war, possessing his own realm in a pacific manner, and undisturbed by hostile incursions, is he in this case safer, or more exempt from uneasiness? No; for even human nature itself is impatient of ease, and ingenious to find out imaginary causes of anxiety and disquiet. Thus he shall either be forming projects to augment the taxes, to enlarge his dominions, to reduce new cities under authority, or to contract alliances and friendships with more formidable powers. Whoever revolves these schemes in his mind, can neither be easy himself, nor suffer others to enjoy security and rest. But concerning avarice, the greatest plague of the human mind, I would not chuse to enlarge at present; a plague which is particularly prevalent in souls resigned to sloth and inactivity, on which account, it is most disturbing to the minds of those in higher sphere and superior dignity.

To this station, we may oppose the lowest rank of mankind: because as, in the general opinion, they are mean and obscure; so, in reality,

reality, they are exposed to all kinds of calamity and pain. On them are accumulated the miseries of poverty, hunger, scorn, insult, severe taxes, and the toils of war: nay, on them such evils descend with redoubled weight and bitterness; because when others are depressed by adverse fortune, they can divert or console it a thousand ways denied to persons in low life. Besides, they are placed by nature, whose laws operate here like a kind of fatal necessity, in a situation so unhappily obscure, that though exposed to every inconvenient or painful accident, they have almost no recourse, by which they may support their destiny, or rise above it.

NOR are these of middle station exempt from distresses: For, placed between the highest and the lowest, it is subservient to the one, and obnoxious to the other; to which, if its superiority were greater, it would be more remote from vexation. But because the distance between it and the subordinate rank is very little, and because it is unequal in force and dignity to the highest order, it must remain contented within its own limits. These therefore endure a great many hardships in the state, such as perhaps may promote its welfare in general, and are at the same time not quite intolerable; yet are

they sufficient to vex the mind, and aggravate the woes of human life. It is not consistent with my present design to pursue these things at greater length; they are all plain to every one's observation, and, from repeated experience, particularly known and felt by myself.

SUCH likewise is the condition of women: For they are harassed, if not with the same pains and difficulties, at least with others little different. They are liable to the same corporeal diseases, the same disturbances of mind, and the same imperfection of reason with men; and so much the more unhappy is their situation, as the delicacy and softness of their nature render them more incapable, either to repell adverse occurrences, or to endure affliction. They are deeply impressed with the same sense of sorrow and regret which men feel from the loss of parents, brothers, sisters, or other allies. They are often joined in a despotic manner to husbands, whose folly, negligence, or prodigality, proves the misfortune of their lives, and the ruin of their families. And the pressure of these evils is the more intense, that they cannot, like men, investigate the most proper remedies, and apply them to the exigencies of their affairs. How much bitterness and uneasiness did my dear Tullia feel from the banishment of her father!

father! how much for the troubles and embarrassments of those to whom she was joined in marriage! And tho' her life was not imbittered with a great number of disagreeable events; yet, according to the judgment even of the most learned, the sense of a few misfortunes may sometimes afflict good and virtuous minds in an equal or superior degree to others, whose advantages have been more numerous and striking. There are besides a considerable number of indispositions attending women, which it is much better to suppress than repeat; but this single circumstance sufficiently discovers the extent of their wretchedness, that, during their whole lives, they are held almost in implicit subjection: For, while virgins, they must obey the commands of parents and friends; and, when wives, they must be subservient to a husband's will. Thus their situation is more intolerable, as less free; nor do they ever obtain liberty till they lose life. So that they should be alone pronounced happy in death; nor do I see what else can be more properly said.—But to return to myself:

HE who is married, besides the ordinary vexations of life, is depressed with another and peculiar species of misery; since he does not suffer for himself alone, but enlarges the sphere
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of his cares and afflictions, by participating those of his wife and family; for he cannot so much as in thought and imagination conceive himself distinct from her to whom he is united in matrimony, the most intimate and inviolable of all human connections. What therefore can the soul of man project or undertake, which is either excellent or glorious, whilst agitated by such misfortunes, and encompassed with so much distress? We ought to be more surpris'd, that it does not throw itself away, and, quite abandoned to despair, sink in darkness and obscurity.

I RETURN therefore to my first position, That none who breath enjoy immunity from pain and sorrow; none are truly happy. And these persons discover very little wisdom, who supposing man born, by his sufferings, to atone for his crimes, dare to imagine such a situation compatible with bliss or happiness. For what we erroneously call *life*, is in reality death; nor can the soul ever enjoy real life, till, freed from these corporeal fetters, it can boast eternal liberty. Hence it is said, that death has been conferred as a benefit by the immortal Gods on their peculiar favourites.

THUS we are told by Herodotus, that when the Argive priestess importuned the tutelar goddess

goddess of that city for the highest degree of happiness to her sons, she found them soon afterwards dead: Death, therefore, was granted them as the best blessing. Should we believe Apollo, when supplicated by Trophonius and Agamedes, who had built him a magnificent temple at Delphi, that he would indulge them with that blessing which afforded greatest happiness to man, we might be led to the same conclusion, since three days afterwards they were found both dead. From which gift it appears, that by the divination of a god, a god to whom the rest had freely resigned the exercise of that art; death is the best blessing which Heaven can bestow on man. Therefore the false opinion, that death is an evil, (which many indulge), is, in sound philosophy, exploded, and entirely eradicated; since even by the decision of Heaven, it is not only free from evil, but the greatest favour, the most excellent gift which the Deities can bestow on mankind: Excellent indeed; for in death we find the final period of our former miseries, and a certain refuge from those future disasters, which others, who have not finished the career of life, must encounter.

WE have instances of a great many in our country, distinguished for goodness and fortitude, who, by protracting life, have suffered
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incredible afflictions. Some will say, they were undeserved, and ought not therefore to be called *miseries*; for there can be no misery but in guilt. Of this we shall inquire elsewhere. But calamities they certainly were; of which even the transient and fleeting idea, that only strikes the fancy and flies away, gives a bitter and disagreeable feeling, not to mention the permanent and corrosive impression itself. From which we may conclude with certainty, that the Thracians acted wisely, whose custom it was, (if we may believe Herodotus), to deplore their children when born, but to rejoice and exult when they died. For they considered the conclusion of life as the end of sorrows, and the harbour of eternal rest; but, with reluctant eyes, they viewed its beginning as the entrance to grief and trouble.

IF therefore it is our misery to be born, and our happiness to die, who would wish to be numbered with the sons of men? Since the condition of his rank is to groan beneath oppressive misery, who would not rather chuse in death to find the true felicity and enjoyment of his being? And if we would prefer this as the noblest acquisition for ourselves, why should we differ so widely in our sense of what is good for our children, or other relatives? Would we wish to
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be in a better state ourselves, than those who are the darling objects of our souls; or rather, would we chuse to enjoy the most consummate happiness, and, at the same time, desire that they should be excruciated with pain and sorrow? This surely can never be.

SINCE therefore this is the true estimate of death, it ought ever to be chearfully welcomed by all, not only when approaching themselves, but such as are most dear to them. And if death be more eligible to any, it must be chiefly so to those, who having become conspicuous by a life spent in the exercise of virtue, and who having lived so long here as destiny permits to human nature, can lose nothing by changing the scene.

I KNOW not truly to whom birth can be thought an advantage; for what is there agreeable or chearful in the prospect of a sensitive being entering into pain and uneasiness? why should it not rather shock us? which indeed would seem to be the case, from the moving complaints and wailings of new-born infants; for these are inspired by Nature, our most wise and amiable parent, who never does any thing in vain, but rather, in all her productions, exhibits some admirable token of the goodness, wisdom, and justice of her intentions. Whence

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it is plain, that to be born, is by no means a very eligible event, nor to be dashed among those rocks that every where occur in life. But when we are born, the next thing to be desired is the most sudden death, that thus we may have an opportunity of flying, as it were, from flames, or inundations, or, what is still more dreadful, from the vicissitudes of fortune.

THE story which is told of Silenus (if a subject so grave will admit an instance of so much levity) confirms the same thing; who being taken by Midas, recovered his freedom by his learning; for he taught the king, that it was best never to be born, but, when born, the next advantage within the reach of his desires, was the most instant death. The same thing appears from the testimony of Euripides, a poet of great wisdom. But my favourite Crantor tells us, that a father, impatient of the death of his son, obtained as an answer from those who consulted the souls of the dead, that his son was very happy, and that it had been much better for himself to have been in the same situation.

IF therefore death is the end of sorrow, if it is the beginning of a safer and happier life, if it eases present and prevents future evils, if it removes us from the danger of every disease, affliction,

affliction, or bitterness; why should we accuse it with so much virulence? why derive so much sorrow from what is a much more natural source of consolation and pleasure? unless perhaps we explore, with anxious uncertainty, the consequences of death: concerning which we may say something, least this single retreat should be left for a subterfuge to our grief and uneasiness; a retreat by no means to be left for those who are pusillanimous. Nor in such variety of arguments, while we attempt a conquest even over death itself, shall I hesitate to investigate any lenitive to my own misfortunes which can be found.

CERTAINLY it is not within our sphere to be anxious with regard to that time which succeeds our death, but rather leave that period to the immortal Gods, whose liberality and wisdom, in this crisis, it would be laudable and pious to trust. For since they receive us to the arms of providence from the womb; since, during the whole course of our life, we are supplied by their bounty, conducted by their wisdom, and indulged by their paternal goodness; why should we fear that they will abandon us in death?

YET it may not be unuseful to inquire a little into these things, though with modesty. For

one of two suppositions must be necessary, either that death should extinguish all consciousness; or that, when separated from this scene by death, the conscious principles should remove to another. But if all sensibility is lost in death, and if our transition from life be like that profound sleep, which sometimes, without being excited by the feverish transports or anxious horrors of dreaming, yields us the most sweet and sacred repose, how immensely do we gain by dying! or what period can be found preferable to one so placid and serene, to which in death the series of future duration shall be similar? But if we rather chuse to think death a transition to those regions inhabited by departed spirits, what can be more agreeable, than to return to that society in death, which, when alive, we loved and admired? or to enjoy eternal being in communion with those, who have laboured, both by their precepts and examples, to render our lives praise-worthy, and our deaths supportable? To me no event could be more welcome, than if death should open a passage to those other regions, where I might not only visit, but dwell with such persons as I have formerly loved, and such as I can never cease to love and praise. When I shall approach my departed friends and relations, with how sincere a
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joy shall I exult! What conversation more endearing! what interviews, what embraces more sweet! "O life truly meritorious of that name, (as Ennius says), replete with every requisite good, and every rational enjoyment!" Whence death must likewise be a happy occurrence, as it is the passage to the happiest life.

For my own part, though afflicted and even depressed by a violent grief, I feel myself not a little relieved by these views and considerations. I may therefore reasonably hope, that there are none who may not receive some advantage and delight from these arguments, collected with so much care from the monuments of the wise and good, and receive them too, in proportion as the griefs of others are less severe than that with which I am at present agitated. For if the most ardent tenderness, the most inviolable filial duty, the purest virtue, the most exact regulation of manners, the most steady conduct; if these, and every other qualification scarce to be seen, much less expected in women, merit attention, I owe the most liberal tribute of tears to a loss so inestimable, so irrecoverable.—But let my reason be superior to my grief; nor ought I so much to consider the vastness of my loss, as how far it becomes me to lament a daughter subjected to the lot of mortality.

mortality. To this let me have recourse in my affliction; for certainly it is consistent with the highest fortitude when shaken, not only to receive, but even explore a remedy:

BUT if there is any one whose reason shall be absorbed in grief, and who shall not think what has been already said sufficiently cogent, let him recollect that he is a man; nor is it less a condition of his nature to die than to live: and could he be exempted from death, or rise above mortality, he ought rather to be esteemed a god than a man; nor could the name of *man* be properly applied to him, were he superior to the most universal and remarkable crisis of human nature.

BESIDES, he can gain nothing by tears; for if these could procure any redress, it would be proper not only to give way to the involuntary stream, but even industriously to impel and increase its current.

IN short, he who grieves immoderately, does not only act an unjust, but a mean and unworthy part. Now the pains arising from baseness and turpitude of manners, are infinitely more severe than those of sorrow. Grief is a sentiment inspired by nature, and consequently may be indulged to a certain degree, without any brand of infamy; but beyond this all is meanness

meannefs and guilt; which on this account are blameable, becaufe they imply fomething unbecoming human nature, and owe their very exiftence to weaknefs and vice. Every immoderate grief therefore is mean, and beneath the dignity of human nature; becaufe all immoderate and unreafonable forrow muft be voluntary, and owe their excefs to indulgence: whence arifes a fault, which men ought to fhun and avoid with their utmoft endeavours, leaft by imbecillity and langour of thought, fuch as haunts the lover diftracted with fondnefs, our paffions either fwell to perturbation, or fink us into weaknefs and effeminacy. Let us rather feek refuge in Homer's precept;

Hafte, rouse, collect the vigour of thy mind,
Nor leave thy finking foul to grief resign'd:
That foul, unshock'd, could formerly fustain
Severer anguish, and more piercing pain.

For we muft naturally fuppofe, that none can furvive the funerals of their friends, without having formerly drunk deep of adverfity; fo clofely is human nature circumfcribed on all hands with variety of woe. Why therefore fhould the foul after having bravely fuffered equal or feverer diftreffes; when, from former exertions, it ought to have acquired more vigour and fpirit; why fhould it lofe all hope,
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and fall a prey to inexorable melancholy? 'This not long ago we have asserted to be unjust. For nature allows us the use of life in the same manner as sums of money are lent, without prescribing any definite time of payment: but if she redemands her own at pleasure, which was lent on condition of being restored, what title have we to accuse her? or why do we not pay nature due acknowledgments, for making us so long the depositories of what she might have so early resumed, rather than fatigue her with our complaints for having at a particular time recovered it?

IT is certain, that we must not regard ourselves here as inhabitants, but lodgers; and when the period of changing our apartment arrives, we ought to remove with cheerfulness, as from an inhospitable, miserable, and disagreeable lodging; and spread our wings with exultation of soul towards a future life, like those who, after a long and troublesome voyage, recognise with transport their native shore. So wise men are actually recorded to have done.

IT may be affirmed, that if any thing disconcerts such as are dying, or renders their relations uneasy, it must either arise from false impressions of the pleasure and advantage of life, or from too high a degree of self-love and private

vate affection. But these false impressions, which reason sufficiently refutes, should be thrown aside; and from all excess of this self-love we ought to abstain so much more willingly, as it is indecent for those who have lived their destined period, to wish, and linger, and grasp at life, in opposition to the decrees of Heaven, or to decline the common destiny of all who have departed before us. This, in short, betrays so much impotence of mind, and so much audacity, that even the last crisis of human misfortunes cannot teach us to bear them, nor the last efforts of divine providence in our discipline reclaim us.

BUT if the death of our friends grieve us, let us reflect that some time they were to die; that death is absolutely uncertain, nor in the least subject to human choice, but dependent on the will of Heaven; and that even those whom we lament, have seen in their turn, and patiently sustained the death of their friends: hence from their own example, as by the injunctions of the dead, we ought to regulate our conduct.

IN short, what ought chiefly and even effectually to comfort us, they are not for ever lost, nor entirely ravished from us, but removed from our view and conversation only for a li-

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mitted time. When therefore we have reached that term prescribed by nature as the ultimate period of life, we shall once more taste the pleasures of an intercourse with them; we shall either be re-admitted to frequent communications, or pass a whole eternity in close and intimate union with them.

THERE are not a few who imagine death attended with insufferable pangs and agony to their relations in their dying moments, and hence perhaps their disturbance; which gives me very little uneasiness, when those more important causes of sorrow, which we have formerly disproved, are abstracted. For the very separation of the soul from the body is either attended with little uneasiness, or none at all, and sometimes happens without the least sensibility; nay, frequently, if we judge rightly and live wisely, with pleasure. But whatever is the quantity of pain, it deserves little attention, because it often begins and ends in the same indivisible instant. Nor, though the pains of death should be protracted to some, have we any reason to despair. For the beneficent Gods, and that good and wise constitution which they have established in nature, may, by numberless methods, not only relieve, but sustain and comfort people in these circumstances:

stances: Of which fact, dying persons have often discovered such symptoms, as were by no means ambiguous; so that, as if newly awaked from an agreeable dream, their whole countenance is so expressive of joy, that one could not but imagine them issuing from life with pleasure. For which reason, those misfortunes that are capable of alleviation can afford no just cause of grief, which, in the natural course of time, will vanish, and be quite extinguished. Not that the mere protraction of time has any force to lessen our griefs; but because we are taught by long habit and constant reflection, that death is no evil, and therefore to be sustained, not only with patience, but chearfulness. But it betrays baseness and folly for men, endued with such extensive and various knowledge, rather to expect the remedies of his grief, after a long interval, from the revolutions of time, thought, and custom, than to find them early in his own bosom. These, when applied, are so certain and efficacious, as not only to ease, but cure every one to whom they are administered.

To me these were so much more necessary, as it appeared more unbecoming for one, who had persisted in comforting others, to give way to his own grief; and perhaps it might have

been whispered not unjustly, "Is this the Cicero, whose sentiments could even gain the attention of the Greek philosophers?"——

BUT I am effectually guarded by philosophy against the vicissitudes of time, the evils of nature, or the snares of fortune: For it is in itself superior to the violence of every injury; so gentle and humane, that with ease it softens and mitigates the most severe pain; in short, so liberal and advantageous, that it exerts all its force, and is ever wholly employed in promoting the good of mankind. Nor ought it indeed to be otherwise; for since by philosophy the aggregate of human misery is well known and thoroughly explored, if she should suffer it to proceed beyond its natural bounds, nor with her salutary presence enlighten and support the sufferer; what is there in nature more wretched than he? What could be more burdensome, what more severe than our present state of being? Or what would it avail to have received from Nature an erect form, a countenance fitted to survey its native heaven, or to contemplate the majesty and perfections of the Divinity? To what end have the immortal Gods inspired us with consciousness and reason? Why taught us to discern what is good, to distinguish virtue from vice, to embrace justice, and

and shun its contrary? In short, what would the organs of speech and the use of language profit us; concessions not indulged to creatures of an inferior order, and by which we excel all other conscious beings beneath the sky? as these advantages would appear less than nothing and vanity, if human nature, oppressed from different causes with innumerable sorrows, could neither rise above them to celestial objects, nor enjoy so many blessings, though the greatest that infinite Goodness could bestow. But as we have received many antidotes against poison; as we can oppose to the bitterness of want, activity, skill, and œconomy; as we can repel the sollicitations of sensual pleasure by modesty and shame: so to the indulgence and liberality of Heaven we owe the inestimable privilege of defending ourselves, by philosophy, against the sting of grief; which as none can praise equal to her excellency, so she alone claims the highest acknowledgments from a number of her votaries, for their tranquillity of mind, for the government of their passions, for their absolute dominion over pleasure, and for an inexpressible vigour and fortitude in every affliction.

“UNASSISTED by thy beneficence, O Philosophy! thou sacred guide of human life,
“how

“ how should I have suffered banishment with
“ patience; how should I have regulated my
“ ambition in public offices; or how should I
“ have supported the present bitter affliction
“ with prudence and dignity!”——“ But may
“ I not congratulate thee, O my dear Tullia;
“ may I not pronounce thee happy, if still thou
“ art conscious in death, who, by the short a-
“ gonies of thy transition, hast at once eluded
“ the shock of such numberless, nameless mis-
“ eries, as must have embittered thy destiny
“ hadst thou survived? Disentangled from pre-
“ sent, and rescued from impending evils, thou
“ art landed in the safe and peaceful harbour
“ of endless repose. Justly may I esteem death
“ agreeable to thee, whether thou revolvest in
“ thy mind that happiness which, when living,
“ it was in thy power to enjoy, or if thou art
“ engaged in calculating the number and great-
“ ness of those evils which thou hast happily
“ escaped in death. Since therefore I must
“ conclude thee happy, I had almost said, since
“ with these very eyes I see thee so, why should
“ the sense of thy fate agonize a father’s heart?
“ Why should I not rather exulting felicitate
“ thee on the acquisition of thy supreme and
“ ultimate good? who art now above the ut-
“ most efforts of pain and bitterness, unless
“ perhaps

“ perhaps touched with the sense of having left
 “ me, sunk beneath the weight of old age, in
 “ a state of public affairs so tumultuous, and
 “ in a situation of life so wretched. But even
 “ this, reason may, in some measure, alleviate;
 “ nor oughtest thou to reflect how much pain
 “ I am at present destined to suffer, but how
 “ short the time which must bring me to par-
 “ take of the same beatitude with thyself; for
 “ nothing extremely severe can happen to those
 “ who are cheered and enlivened with the hopes
 “ of future and approaching good.”

YET I know not what error, what miserable
 blindness to truth, involves us; for we have
 by no means the same sincere and perfect en-
 joyment of good, as our sense of evil is sharp and
 tormenting. Whence it happens, that, even in
 an involuntary manner, we increase our unhap-
 piness; but our good, instead of gaining lustre
 from our estimation, instead of being heightened
 by our enjoyment, or augmented by the cheer-
 ful disposition in which it finds us, for ever di-
 minishes in our conception and sense of it;
 which surely ought not to be the case. For if
 we would treat this matter seriously, why should
 we fly from grief and adversity, which inspire
 and confirm our fortitude; which, if they did
 not exist, could never produce that virtue, nor
 could

could any such quality be recognised? Why should we dread death, whose effects are so friendly, since, by continually recollecting it, we become better? Nor will the meditations it inspires permit our inclinations to turn upon such a course as may eclipse our names, by the infamous brand of injustice or intemperance. Why should we so eagerly pursue advantages which are the objects of vulgar admiration, and which, when attained, rather tend to corrupt than mend the heart? And so much are we enervated by the fallacious arts of pleasure, that scarce do we remember at all the certain approach of our fate.

PLATO, the chief and greatest of the philosophers, wisely said, “ That whatever our
“ corporeal senses presented as objects of hope
“ or fear, were no more than dreams, and
“ therefore entirely to be scorned; and that in
“ order to shun the evils here, we should fly to
“ an eternal scene, where, if ye do not retire, it
“ will be impossible to avoid them.” But no man can arrive at immortality, unless death conduct his steps, and open his passage.— Where would this tend? To convince us that death is not only exempt from uneasiness, serene, seasonable; but in short, a real good, a most
munificent

munificent and generous source of supreme and incorruptible felicity.

IT was thus Cato departed from life, highly pleased that he had found a cause to justify his dying. Nor can any one imagine, that he who was among the wisest of men, would have expressed such pleasure at the approach of his fate, had he not thought death a real happiness. For surely, in his own concerns, particularly such as fall under the cognisance of sense, no man is deceived.

THIS may likewise be authoris'd by the testimony of Artaban, uncle to Xerxes, a man of great wisdom; of whom we are told by Herodotus, that when Xerxes, viewing the whole powers of his almost innumerable army drawn up before him, wept to think that not a man of them should be found surviving a hundred years after that time, he answered, " That the living had so many and miserable accidents to suffer, as obliged every one frequently to wish for death; and that life was continually disturbed with such a succession of calamities and diseases, so full of perpetual solicitude, as to make the shortest appear sufficiently long." No man therefore can doubt, that death is the refuge of a painful life. Nor did he stop here; but likewise added,

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“That when the immortal Gods veiled and
 “gilded human life with many advantages,
 “to hide its intrinsic misery, they had acted
 “with some degree of envy, lest, conscious of
 “the sweetness of death, we should pursue it
 “by every possible method.”

IT is fabled that Amphiaraus was very dear to Apollo and Jupiter, yet never arrived at old age.

FROM all which, what else can we conjecture, but that an accelerated death is the gift of Heaven, and a grand acquisition? Therefore this maxim of the dramatic poet is judicious and pertinent;

For he whom God in vernal years selects,
 With love embraces, and with care protects,
 Snatch'd from misfortunes ere his youth expires,
 In death, the end of human wo, retires.

For the Gods will suffer no being, who is the object of their fondness, to be miserable; they must necessarily therefore take from them a life replete with sinister accidents.

WHAT can happen to any man so delightful as to render him extremely tenacious of life? Perhaps the pleasure which he receives from the acquisition of any art or science. But would you excel in art or science, you must expect to be envied in proportion to your eminence; fatigue and anxiety will attend your pursuit; in-
 difference

wealth, Miltiades, Ephialtes, Cimon, Themistocles, and Aristides? How much misery did they procure to themselves by their fidelity, benevolence, integrity, and steadiness? For this they were not only stripped of their honours, their power and authority, but even sent into exile. It ought to have been quite the reverse. Men whose characteristics are wisdom and love of their country, should be adorned with every ensign of public honour, and command attention from every eye. Among ourselves, Scipio Africanus having espoused a glorious cause, to check the insatiate ambition of a few, was one morning found dead in his bed; nor was it suspected without foundation, that his murderers were admitted by his wife, who was sister to the Gracchi. What could be more wretched than the fate of Metellus, from his expedition against Jugurtha called *Numidicus*, a man of eminent worth and fame, who, because he would not swear obedience to a law pernicious to himself, was forced into banishment! Yet I must confess, that amongst all the different kinds of exile, amongst all the different causes of misfortune, the situation of *Numidicus* was most honourable; whose sincerity, integrity, and patriotism, were the sources of his sufferings. It must
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be owned, however, that to be expelled his country, to be torn from his dearest relations, to be deprived of his fortune, to be an afflicted witness of the tears and sufferings of his children, were calamities scarce supportable. I omit the instances of M. Regulus, C. Marius, and L. Brutus, whose lives were sacrificed to their country. I would not be prolix in my allusions to such persons, whose fate may be learned from their histories, from their statues, and even from common fame. These accidents are doubtless very numerous, and very severe : yet this is still more to be regretted, that, in the whole creation, we cannot find more consummate misery, than what must attend a man engaged in the pursuit of public offices, fired with ambition, and dependent on the inclinations of the people. What inutterable terrors, what extreme hesitation, what vigorous efforts, what incessant concern, must attend such a state! Hence we may justly pronounce, that he numbers all his hours by vexations. For if he is of inferior station, that must necessarily imply the mortifying circumstance, of being obliged to rise to fortune and independence by studying and humouring the inclinations, manners, and tempers of his superiors. Can he therefore who serves the people, who are insatiable

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their demands, invidious even of those they trust, ignorant of their real interest, and propensely fond of changes; can he ever hope to be happy? Does he not rather lament the unhappiness of his circumstances, and the lubricity of his fortune, as often as he thinks upon the dispositions which must characterize every populace? It was a noble observation of the ancient poet,

For he, from whom alike the powers divine
Existence share, and those of mortal line,
With light and shade diversify'd his plan,
But dash'd with endless wo the life of man.

Whilst therefore we enjoy this light, though we may seem to live, in effect we are no more than continually dying; or rather, we retain no more of life but the name, having lost all the substantial advantages comprehended in its general idea. Let me affirm, that I cannot see through the whole variety of human life, what can happen either to invite our wishes, or yield us any degree of enjoyment. It is no secret, no unfrequent accident, that a number of people, rather than fall into greater evils than those which generally happen in the course of things, have industriously, by their own interposition, accelerated their fate. This I do not mention to give it the sanction of my approbation, but
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as an instance of that pressure which life continually suffers, from the numberless difficulties that every where surround it. Cleomenes king of the Lacedemonians, and his son, both left the present scene by a voluntary death. Besides these, Theagenes the Numantian, lest he should fall into the hands of his enemies, first destroyed his friends, and then himself. Thus we seem to have declared sufficiently, how little reason we have to pursue life; or rather, how much to fly from it. And were it not beneath the dignity of men to explore the examples of fortitude in a sex much weaker than they, we might collect from history the wife of Asdrubal; who seeing Carthage subjected to the power of its enemies, plunged herself and three children into the flames of her burning country.

BUT besides these calamities, which are more striking and illustrious, let us honestly confess, that so great is the misery to which human nature is subjected, as not only to comprehend the whole race, but even all its individuals so that none can boast immunity. This makes it so much the more surprising, that our pains are not limited to the quantity of evils which are general in life; but we daily exert ourselves, even with our full effort, to become more unhappy than our situation requires. Neither
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will you find any living creature through the whole extent of things, except man alone, which exerts its cruelty, not only in hurting its own particular species, but even itself. Nor was the observation of Dicearchus unjust, who, in his learned and perspicuous treatise on death, thought it would admit of no hesitation, that a greater number of men had perished by the cruelty and violence of men, than by all other adverse occurrences taken together. For the avarice of many is so great, so boundless their ambition, such their avidity of wealth and power, that every means, every conduct, which can tend to the accomplishment of their desires, to them appears lawful. Nor is this evil of modern date, nor confined to the narrow limits of time and place; but, in former ages, its operations were violent, and its dominion wide. For its devastations were not circumscribed by particular societies of men; states and empires, raised even to their foundation, were its frequent victims.

BUT if from societies, as the mind would naturally descend, you turn your attention to particular men, you shall find them possessed of but very little which you can admire, or could wish to obtain. For let your imagination form to itself, from the common notions of mankind,

kind, an idea of every thing prosperous and happy which can happen in life; let riches, health, honours, and power be collected; let pleasures of every kind be added; when you have conferred all these on any man, you cannot ascertain his possession of them, nor insure their duration one moment, for they are capable of the most unexpected changes in eternal succession. All human possessions are perishable and uncertain; they elude our grasp, and vanish even in fruition: The most vigorous efforts cannot obtain, nor the wisest plan secure them; for they depend alone on the capricious administration of fortune, and the instantaneous revolutions of time. What can be more mean in a reasonable being, than to place his happiness on events which depend on the wild and extravagant eddies of time and fortune; to be elated with her fallacious smile, or dejected when she contracts her brow? How inglorious is it to boast in any prosperous occurrence, or to lament any thing adverse with inconsolable tears?

WHERE then is the exaggerated distinction between man and speechless animals, if we, in the same manner with them to whom Nature has denied the use of reason, depend entirely on external things; if we retain nothing

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of fortitude, no vigour nor steadiness? For though Nature, not like a mother but a step-dame, has made the corporeal frame of man tender, and obnoxious to a thousand evils, and his soul racked with misfortunes, depressed with fears, and reluctant to toils; she has however endowed us with certain rays of divinity, with sparks of fortitude and reason, by whose assistance we are able to struggle with sorrow, to resist fear, to sustain and conquer fatigue with ease and dignity. It is therefore incumbent on us not to extinguish that portion of deity, that light of consciousness and wisdom which we share, but to animate and nourish it when depressed.

If we are considerably advanced in life, there can be nothing in approaching dissolution with which we ought to be much affected; as it shall either certainly place us in better circumstances than those which living we enjoy, or, at least, not in worse. For who will deny, if the soul is to be quite annihilated, that there can be no evil in consciousness extinguished? But if it survives in possession of its former vigour, and delivered from the body, what life can be more happy! what more divine! This ought to be a great, a real source of gladness and pleasure. No difficulty therefore remains;

mains : but we may assert with ease and freedom, that death is a real good ; and that, far from grieving at its presence, we ought never to fly from it, sometimes to desire it ; and this so much the more, in proportion to the time which any one has lived. For then, when he begins to be cloyed with all the advantages and pleasures which life can offer, he shall at once retire from all the miseries of human, and arrive at all the beatitude of divine life. Nor am I one of those who can be easily persuaded, that the soul perisheth with the body ; that a being, which so largely participates the nature of God, should ever be entirely extinct ; but rather that, having finished the limited career of life, it returns to its native immortality. For what can more become a man furnished with arguments so numerous and invincible, than to preserve his courage undaunted, and to shake off entirely the feminine passions of fear and sorrow ?

THEY who too much deplore the dead, nor are capable, with due grandeur and dignity of soul, to despise the adverse accidents of life, justly and highly deserve the following reproach ;

Shame to your sex and years, in youth resign'd
To all the weakness of a woman's mind;
Whilst she, a woman, courage still maintains,
And in her breast a manly spirit reigns.

For many women may be found, who, in private distresses, have discovered the most consummate prudence and magnanimity. But a masculine fortitude ought in the same manner, as his lord commands a stubborn slave, to treat every immoderate desire and sorrow; to subdue and restrain them as the most depraved and weakest powers of the soul, which, if they are permitted to rise and exert their force a little, will not only tyrannise over reason, but obtain a complete triumph over the whole mind; a state more unbecoming, more destructive to man, than any else which can be imagined.

GORGIAS the orator, when extenuated with years, and on the verge of life, being asked, if he was willing to die? answered, "Yes; for
" I shall escape with pleasure, as from a lodging, where I have been long plagued with bad
" air, and every other inconvenience:" An opinion which alone could be indulged by a man of excellence and dignity, and which may be wished still to survive in the minds and conversations of every one. What indeed could he say more noble? For when he numbered the
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the evils which, living, he was reduced to the necessity of suffering, what ought he to do, but rejoice at the approach of death, as the end of sorrows, which he eternally forsakes? Thus a man is entitled to speak, who is not a slave to his passions, who is not entangled by the allurements of pleasure; in short, who is not obsequious to the arbitrary dictates of any favourite inclination: which is the sublimest perfection of reason, the highest degree of wisdom; for it renders us superior to the necessities of nature, invincible even to the attacks of grief, above the pressure of regret or solicitation of desire, and, in a word, fearless in every human contingency.

ARE we tormented with the death of our children or allies? why so? That we may discover our folly, by suffering with impatience a fate which we cannot avert, and which, in contradiction to our will, must descend upon us with all its weight; whilst the examples and testimonies which the wiser and better part of mankind have left behind them to illuminate eternity with their splendor, are entirely neglected by us. Would it be in the least more absurd, with the use of sight, to walk like a blind man; or, when you might enjoy society and sunshine, pursue solitude and darkness?

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AND now the current of our discourse leads us to those, whose conduct deserves our emulation, and whom antiquity proposes to us as examples worthy of our pursuit. I imagine therefore no man will hesitate to pronounce, that death is not to be numbered amongst our evils, but ranked amongst the greatest goods of which our nature is susceptible. For if it removes us from misery, if it places us in a happier state of being, if it is neither miserable itself, nor productive of any misery, why should it be pronounced an evil? But if such is its benignity, that it puts us in possession of eternal advantages, and, by depriving us of a life full of vicissitudes and subject to corruption, recalls us to one which is immortal and incorruptible, what can be more productive of happiness than death? We have therefore heard, that the wisest of men have not only been unhocked by the death of their relations, not only remained unaffected with grief, but have discovered a rational joy and satisfaction.

IT is delivered to memory, that when Anaxagoras, during his prelection of the nature of things amongst his friends, was told that his son was just expired, he only answered, That, "in begetting a son, he begot a mortal creature ;"

“ture;” a very rational maxim, and worthy to have been pronounced by so great a man; for I do not see what could have been said expressive of greater wisdom or equanimity. Should he have said, “Alas, he died young!” this would have shown his depression of mind, and not that determined spirit which is necessary to encounter adversity: Or that he was tormented, not on his own, but his son’s account; would he not then have confessed his ignorance of the numberless evils his son had escaped? Or that he was grieved, but acknowledged and suffered the accident as a part of human destiny; where then was the steadiness, the prudence, the wisdom of a philosophical character? or how did he differ from the most uncultivated vulgar? Amongst whom however there are many who are not only little afflicted with such events as necessarily happen, but who declare it as their opinion, that such occurrences ought neither to affect us with emotion or surprise, because they are inevitable and common to all. But he, who was truly a wise man and a philosopher, instead of being struck with the unexpected message, instead of being diverted from his subject, rather collecting his attention, and raising his voice, gave the most striking instance of fortitude and wisdom.

I WISH the same thing could be said of a great many amongst us, whom, if at any time struck with a reverse of fortune, you would imagine in no better situation, than overwhelmed and abandoned to ultimate despair; as if they had felt the weight of some new affliction, not destined for others, but reserved from all eternity in the bosom of Fate for them alone; some unheard-of misery, which ought neither to have happened then, nor at any future period: And when they ought to exert the whole energy of their souls, they are not only forgetful of these virtues formerly exhibited, not only insensible to the illustrious examples among their own ancestors, but even lost to themselves. So extensive is the power of that pusillanimous languor over their minds, so invincible the tyranny of grief and sadness.

BUT can I think that man possessed of moral liberty, who is under the dominion of grief; who is disturbed, impelled, overwhelmed by any unexpected accident; who, intent alone on the greatness of his sorrow, is incapable either of projecting or contemplating any thing; who depends not in the least for his own happiness upon himself, but expects all his good from time and fortune, of which the essential qualities are *fluctuation* and *change*? This I would
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not chuse to call by the milder name of *servitude*, but by that of *the most miserable captivity*. For what is the difference between the wretch who inhabits the dungeon, surrounded with the vigilance of guards, and groaning beneath the weight of hostile chains; what is the difference between such a one, and him who, tyrannised by grief, has lost all the powers of choice and deliberation? The one, though his body be subjected, may possess ample freedom of soul, and indulge the pleasing hope of regaining his former liberty: but he who is under the despotism of grief, neither can boast freedom, nor health of body, and, at the same time, bends beneath the most abject slavery of sorrow; for he can neither enjoy his friends, nor assist the commonwealth, nor superintend domestic affairs, nor execute public business. Thus relaxed from all employments, to suffer more fatigue than can attend any one, though the most laborious, he neither obeys another, nor governs himself: To whom, as he is for ever pressed with painful and difficult alternatives, one of two things must be necessary, either to protract his grief, and be miserable; or, what is absolutely impracticable, that he should at once retain his grief, and lose his misery.

How much more wise was the procedure of

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Xenophon,

Xenophon, who, while he celebrated the sacred solemnities, and heard that his eldest son fell at the battle of Mantinea, only laid the chaplet from his head, but persisted with steadiness in ordering the sacred rites. But when it appeared that the youth had fallen gloriously, the father again resumed his chaplet, and invoked those very gods, in whose worship he was engaged, to witness, that he had more pleasure from the virtues of his son than grief from his loss. Such a man, I might venture to say, would be equally prepared for every possible contingency, nor feel his soul disconcerted with any. For why should I believe that the man who could persevere in the worship of Heaven with so much equanimity and decorum, even when he heard of the death of his son, would oppose its decree, by immoderately deploring that catastrophe? or that he who preferred the consciousness of his son's virtue to the length of his life, might not justly be thought so inflamed with the love of his country, so much inspired with a passion for virtue, as to remain equally unmoved in every vicissitude of life?

BUT in proportion as those who discover this greatness of soul are seldom to be found, so much more conspicuous they are. For nothing is more entitled to praise, than the just and
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laudable pursuit of eternal renown, or a warm and inviolable attachment to our country, or patience and dignity in suffering misfortunes. Animated by these grand principles, the soul rises above herself, and scorns those tempests which shake the rest of mankind. But they who are too much distracted with low care and solicitude, will entirely exclude from their minds the desire of praise, the advantage of their country, and, in short, whatever we esteem great or good. Nor can any one whose whole soul is tormented with private and selfish anxiety, either project the welfare of his country, or distinguish himself by noble actions, or undertake and support any grand enterprize; but, for ever intent on his own concerns, and consulting his own advantage, he shall forget every thing else, and remain night and day the perpetual subject of his own attention. Thus he shall neither perform the offices due to civil life nor to human nature. It is the essential character of a good man, to labour with equal assiduity for the welfare of others as for his own. Nor is it less the character of a good patriot, to suspend, or even sacrifice, every private advantage, and to make the highest happiness and greatest safety of his country his perpetual and ultimate end; from which

great pursuits, neither grief, nor any other disturbance, should have power to abstract us.

HISTORIANS tell us, that in four days Pericles was deprived of two sons, youths of a very promising genius, who sustained his grief with so much fortitude, and such unbroken spirit, that he changed no part of his former manners or dress, but preserved the same order and plan of public appearances as before, nor ever took the crown from off his head; of whom it is recorded, that he would have thought nothing more unworthy, than if his grief had extorted from him any tokens of an unmanly and dejected mind. Him then we must acknowledge a brave man, whom neither the irresistible force of nature, which often melts the soul to too much tenderness, nor the love of his children, which is said to have been ardent, could dissolve to grief, nor move from his uniform and regular tenor of conduct; a behaviour not only worthy of praise, but eternal memory. Nor is it surprising: For real fortitude excludes and banishes unavailing anxiety; it suppresses the desires; it reduces fear to subjection; it demands nothing unworthy of a brave man, nor is repulsed from any pursuit by terror or weakness.

AND though reason itself, assisted by the dic-
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rates of learning, and the force of culture, confirms nature however elevated and sublime, which certainly was the case with Pericles, a man of eminent learning and superior genius ; yet native fortitude is the grand support of the mind : which as it despises the common contingencies of life, nor, like a being depressed and riveted to earth, regards any thing low with attention ; so its fruits are produced with greater ease, abundance, and maturity, when the force of reason, the influence of culture, and the assistance of learning are applied to it, as to a grateful and congenial soil. We must not then imagine that these great men were quite insensible of grief ; for what fortitude could we find in hearts naturally hard and unfeeling ? But those who feel grief exert the whole collected vigour of the soul against it, nor forbear the contention, till having obtained a complete victory, they remain despotic masters of the field. For it is unquestionably true, that no greater plague, no surer perdition, can happen to the mind, than relaxation in its own discipline ; which, if it is attentive, and prepared for resistance, easily sustains every violence, or baffles and repels even the most resolute attacks. But when its nerves lose their vigour by indolence and remission, it is so

fiercely

fiercely invaded, so closely pressed on all hands, that in vain are its utmost endeavours to recover its poise. Nor was any one ever able to repulse the incursions of grief, nor to bear the conflict with courage, unless by assembling and preparing every defensive power for resistance. Nor is fortitude acquired, but by first having long and obstinately withstood many griefs; from whence arises a habit that clothes the mind in armour self-derived, and fortifies us against every wound of nature, and every sting of fortune.

CAN we suppose that Harpagus the Mede would have been able to exhibit such a grand example of self-possession, as Herodotus transmits to posterity, if he had not formerly been frequently and long engaged in the exercise of patience and fortitude? This however he did not without the most ample reward, as by it he acquired eternal fame; for he distinguished himself so much by wisdom and magnanimity, as to suffer, without the least indication of uneasiness, one of the most inhuman injuries that could be inflicted on man; and, by thus suppressing his emotions, he was able to satiate his vengeance on a tyrant for his execrable cruelty. Thus when King Astyages had caused his son to be slain, and served up to
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the father at an entertainment; when, after supper, he had presented his head, and demanded of Harpagus with what animal's bowels he had been feasted; he, neither frightened nor disconcerted in the least degree, answered, "That he knew what was done; and that whatever pleased the king ought to please him." So he concealed his sense of this brutal injury, till he could call Cyrus from Persia, who, at his arrival with a mighty army, obtained an easy and complete conquest of the kingdom, and absolute power of the king's person from Harpagus, whom Astyages had trusted with the command of his forces.

THUS was the detestable tyrant subjected to the power of Cyrus, and forced justly to atone for his violation of a tie so sacred; an action worthy to fill the theatre of human nature, and the circle of eternity with praise. By this, not only those who sink beneath affliction may be excited to fortitude and patience, but even kings, and such as are intrusted with the command of others, may learn, that no power can give sanction or impunity to impious and cruel actions. For such is the heat, such the resentment, with which impiety and injustice are attended, that though mankind were willing to suffer and conceal those crimes, the very elements

ments themselves, nay, heaven and hell, would raise in arms against them. And though the indignation of Heaven may sometimes delay its full completion, yet are not the wicked suffered to exult and triumph in impiety, but incessantly tormented with the anguish of an offended conscience, and the intolerable sense of iniquity: These internal plagues, like furies, for ever torture them, and are as inseparable from them as existence itself. Nay, so extensive, so powerful is our resentment of impiety, that when tyrants have been slain, and suffered all the anguish which ingenious cruelty could inflict, not a heart relented, not a tear fell for them; for towards these men, and towards these alone, compassion forgets her generous impulse, and becomes totally extinct.

Now though grief, as we have formerly said, ought to be suppressed by reason, it will be much more effectually cured by habit, whose power is so great, as not only to make every tempest of the soul subside, but also to impress a contrary bias on nature, to change and render it entirely different from itself; by whose assistance we may not only with ease repel and despise the stings of grief, but even the thunderbolts of fortune. Let us therefore consider, let us fix it as a principle, that nothing

thing which befalls human nature is a proper subject of grief; not death, for we have already acknowledged it a blessing; not indigence, because this is often a portion administered to us by Heaven for the best; not banishment, since the whole world is open to every one; nor other vicissitudes of the same kind, which the vulgar opinion denominates the greatest of evils. For there is no evil, however severe, from which, by the disinterested beneficence of Heaven, some advantage much greater and more eligible may not be extracted. The writings of the philosophers are full, and almost every page of them pregnant with reasons and arguments, together with such a number of examples, that we could scarce wish for more. Since then things are as we find them, what reason have we to fear any thing? what grief has power enough to subdue us?

DION, of the Platonic school, when his son had expired by a fall from the top of an house, did not only remain unmoved, but strenuously pursued the business in which he was engaged: By which action we have the decision of a wise man, and a Platonist, how other philosophers ought to behave in the same circumstances.

BUT the conduct of Traheaspas was much
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braver, who was a spectator of his son's fate transfixed by an arrow, without the least degree of uneasiness. For when Cambyfes, full of wine and resentment, had aimed a shaft at his son, and pierced his bosom, he desired his father to observe whether it had reached his heart; to whom, when Traheaspas had replied, that the shaft had pierced it, "Have I not
" then," redemanded the king, "a steady
" aim?" The father, without the least discovery of uneasiness, without turning away, or changing his countenance, answered, "That
" he did not believe Apollo himself could dis-
" miss an arrow with more certainty." What can we suppose this father would have done, if his son had fallen in the exertion of his courage, and warmly engaged amidst the heat and fury of a battle, who could, without any sensible emotion, behold an innocent son expire by a cruel and unmerited wound? Must we not imagine that the honourable death of a son, who fell the glorious victim of his country, would give infinite pleasure to such a parent? Yet I doubt not, but there are numbers who would pronounce him impious, and deaf to the most tender importunities of nature. But let these judge as they will; it is enough to me, if they grant, that this was a most conspicuous

cuous instance of fortitude, and a surprising conquest of grief.

IF then, while we survey the virtue of others, our souls, when unbalanced by adversity, resume their wonted firmness, who can we suppose would give way to grief, after hearing of so many who had conquered the struggles of nature and passion in affliction? For which reason, I am afraid lest so great a number of examples collected from antiquity, may appear vain, or even irksome. But if I wrote for others, and not more particularly for myself, perhaps I should be shorter in my observations, and more diffuse in my examples. Yet it happens, I know not how, that we are naturally impelled to collect remedies from the evils of others for our own; at least, so it seems to me; and whilst I endeavour the cure of my own mind, such as may happen to revolve these pages, ought not to be surprised, if they find any thing expressed with more than ordinary prolixity. This was doubtless my plan, that I might be of service to others as well as to myself, and console as much as possible the uneasiness of every sufferer. By recapitulating those things, therefore, I have found my own sorrows much soothed and diminished. Hence I flatter my inclination, that the same causes may

operate upon others the same salutary effect: if I may, without offence to modesty, let me likewise be permitted to hope it. For amidst such a quantity of arguments and examples, in which those who read will find their curiosity fully gratified, what heart can remain unmoved? what grief be indocile to the voice of reason and experience?

[Here a considerable part is wanting.]

NOR am I ignorant, that a great many cases may happen, in which the soul is so disturbed, as to fly from all remedies: and if this be at any time our situation, it must be particularly so, when we are under the influence of grief; which happens for this reason, that the memory of a deceased friend, an ally, or a son, is so dear to us, as almost to place the person before our very eyes. Thus, though it perpetually irritates every sense of sorrow, though it calls forth our tears in profusion, we can never condescend to resign; and though lenitives might be found to sooth us, yet our ears are more accessible to every thing, than to the words of those who would administer a cure. Such a conduct is doubtless very wrong; but the error is so delightful, that, in proportion to the
pleasure

pleasure it gives, we are reluctant to forsake it. Let therefore nature operate ; let every one, for some time, enjoy the melancholy pleasure of regret : For though we ought not to stem the current of grief in its first and most violent impulses, yet I am not in the least afraid, that when, of itself, it begins to subside, and become insensibly more remiss, in that important crisis, we will spontaneously apply these rules and arguments to banish its remains. Nor can any thing be more useful than, even in the hours of mirth and chearfulness, to prevent too much dissipation, by revolving these topics, and keeping the books which contain them for ever in our hands : For thus they may be read, impressed on the mind, and acquired by the memory almost *verbatim* ; so that when they have taken possession of the understanding, it will neither be easy to efface nor obliterate them. Thus it will happen, that for ever provident of grief, we shall be able to intercept its most unforeseen attacks, by the application of these remedies, which, unless they are before accurately studied, and thoroughly understood, will be absorbed, or swept away, by the torrent. This I have felt in myself : Nor was my experience cheaply purchased ; because, not many years ago, I reviewed, with care and accuracy,

curacy, all that had been said to fortify the heart against grief. For though I had read with diligence what the philosophers had wrote, either concerning death or other calamities, such as Theophrastus, Xenocrates, and others; yet this I did not do from any presage that their writings might be of use to me in my future griefs. On this account, I did not read them so frequently, nor retain them so carefully, as it afterwards appeared that I ought to have done. For being at once surprised with the pressure of a sudden affliction, I could have no recourse to books and study, till quite dejected by the violence of my grief; yet, by the course of time, as my uneasiness did not increase, my mind became more deliberate, and more susceptible of comfort from philosophy.

BUT let us proceed to what remains; which, though not an ample field, is perhaps highly worthy of our knowledge and observation, as it is extremely fruitful of every thing useful and agreeable, which are the particular objects of our search and attention.

WHAT then can inspire us with the smallest hesitation, in pronouncing that the death of our friends is no subject of grief? Perhaps it may strike our fancy, that we would have received mighty advantage from the care and assistance
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of those whom we have lost: This concern, however, extends not to those friends and relations whose death we seem to lament, but terminates merely in ourselves. It is therefore a base and mercenary regret, not inspired by nature, not dictated by friendship, but the child of interested expectation and mean advantage. What then can be more impious and despicable, than for him, who seems thus afflicted, to be reduced to the necessity of confessing, even when so much agitated by the fate of his friend or relation, that, in losing his friend, he has lost some external advantage; which being abstracted, the death or life of the person deplored would be to the mourner indifferent events.

BUT we need not search among the Persians and Scythians for instances of fortitude; our own city affords us examples from men of the highest reputation, and most consummate worth, who sustained, with so much bravery and constancy, not only the death of friends, with whom they had lived in the greatest intimacy, but even that of their children; children too endeared by all the ties of nature and virtue, that they may not only be compared, but even with the highest justice preferred, to the Greeks formerly mentioned. And it was so much the more surprising in them, that the
persons

persons whose loss they sustained with so much vigour and steadiness, would not only have been useful to them had they survived, but were almost the only sources from which the sufferers could expect either advantage or pleasure.

FROM whence could more advantage be expected than from a son? whence more delight than from an only son? But Q. Fabius lost a son, an only son, after he had arrived at the consular dignity; after he had executed many noble enterprises, and planned others of still superior extent and grandeur: yet he did not only preserve himself from being depressed with grief, (a conduct sufficient to indicate the greatness of his soul), but even pronounced his son's funeral panegyric in the Forum, than which no instance of a behaviour more admirable or praise-worthy can be found in the whole annals of human nature. And who could cease to admire his oration? a performance exquisite for genius, taste, and method. By what means was it possible for him to pronounce what he said without tears, or to meditate what he wrote without grief? since in his oration we are surprised, and even astonished with this in particular, that he does not follow the general method, by treating of the
fortitude

fortitude of others, that, from their example, he may sustain his own misfortune; but expatiating on his own son alone, he enumerates, in a long discourse, all the virtues, all the praises, which were peculiar to the departed youth, and every circumstance which could heighten paternal regret: An instance of virtue so singular, that perhaps it may seem to diminish considerably the fame of Horatius Pulvillus; yet as he too distinguished himself amongst the greatest of mankind, I should think it criminal to pass him over in silence, since, in resigning his son to the Greatest and Best of Beings with so much greatness of soul, and such equality of temper, he made a more grateful sacrifice to Heaven, than that of the temple which he consecrated. For whilst, in the exercise of his pontifical office, and holding the pillar, he pronounced the solemn words of consecration, having heard that his son was dead, he neither removed his hand from the pillar, lest the sacred rites should be interrupted, nor turned his face from the people, lest he should rather seem attentive to his own grief, than to the public welfare and happiness.

WHERE is there a more signal, or more illustrious instance of this kind than L. Paulus?

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who, in a few days, lost two sons, with so much serenity of soul, that scarce any symptom of a grief, which must have been in itself bitter, escaped him. Nay, in his oration to the Roman people concerning his own transactions, he rather rejoiced, that what was threatened adverse to the state had, by the course of providence, fallen on him alone.

WHO will deny that Sulpicius Gallus acted nobly? whose innocence, wisdom, and military virtue, glowed with more than native lustre, heightened by his fortitude at the death of his son; whose virtue though I could not with cheerfulness suppress, yet my fancy, conscious of her approach to Cato, resumes her ardor and precipitates her flight, and, as if transported to a placid harbour, when all the elements conflict with inexorable fury, reposes in the character and example of this god-like man. Nor can the noble actions of that hero, nor his virtues, not only tried in political but military life, inspire me with more admiration, than that fortitude which, at the death of his son, then in prospect of public dignity, he discovered in the eyes of all his countrymen. Nor would it be difficult to comprehend, in this discourse, such of our countrymen as have imitated the illustrious examples of antiquity in
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the noble actions which they performed, even when clouded with domestic misfortune and calamity, such as have suffered courageously and patiently the most exquisite distresses which fortune could inflict. For when Quintus Martius Rex had lost an only son, of the greatest piety and virtue, he became, by a strong effort of prudence, so much superior to his grief, that the same day in which he had seen the funeral fires of his son, he entered the hall, and ordered the senate to be assembled. And Crassus, when his son was slain in that battle which he fought with the Parthians, was so far from grieving, that he reproached the army for being so much moved for the loss of one soldier; and urged them, inspired with the invincible spirit of their ancestors, to fight with their utmost bravery for their country, leaving to him alone the task of avenging his dead son. But Publius Crassus, more ancient than he, a man of eminent fame and consular dignity, both saw and sustained with moderation the death of P. Crassus his son. Nor was Cneus Cepio less worthy of praise than Crassus; perhaps he deserved more: for having heard that his son was lost at sea, he appeared so little touched with grief, that none of his most intimate acquaintances could perceive the least al-

teration either in his countenance or deportment. Why should I enumerate the Pifones, Scevolæ, Bruti, Marcelli, Metelli, Lepidi, and Aufidii? each of whom having lost a number of their nearest relations, either connected by conjugal, parental, or filial ties, were so far from thinking lamentation the proper decorum of a noble character, that the funerals of their friends proved so many successful trials of their eminent virtue, in which they discovered themselves not only faithful to their own dignity, but to that of their ancestors, and even of the Roman name. This was their conduct, and in this they placed their glory.

WHILST I recapitulate the severe misfortunes of great and good men; I would be ashamed to do it in a prolix and florid manner; because fortitude is the distinguishing virtue of our sex, and is still more powerful and illustrious in the noblest and most eminent of their kind. Let us therefore descend to make trial of a softer sex, that when they shall likewise be found distinguished for magnanimity, men may blush to observe, in a nature so gentle, so susceptible of every painful impression, instances of that force and grandeur in which they glory; nor easily suffer themselves to be conquered by those in whom nature has left

a greater share of weakness, conquered even in those qualities which are essential to their sex and character.

For if this tenet be true, which we have somewhere else mentioned as recorded by Theophrastus, that the world is a certain vast theatre, animated by a divine spirit, adorned and embellished with innumerable shining ornaments on all sides, to show the consummate wisdom of its Artificer: that, in the midst of this vast and various scene, God has thought proper to place his creature man, that he might incessantly struggle with vicissitudes, griefs, poverty, disease, and innumerable accidents; and that God himself beholds from above, how much force every one exerts in the struggle, what use every one makes of the fortitude originally derived from him: If this, I say, be true, we can see no reason to doubt, why the Roman people, when attentive to the spectacles of the Circus, should hate such gladiators as descend to mean supplications for life, and favour those who have a just contempt of it. In the same manner, the immortal Powers, when they behold men too anxiously concerned for life, and endeavouring to shun its ultimate period, must entertain some degree of resentment against them. But they will view with tenderness, and accumulate with blessings those,

those, who either when recalled from life themselves, or when they see their friends recalled, obey the divine mandate with chearfulness, and are conscious that, from this event, they can suffer no evil. But if we find, that even the women have shone in this character, why should we detract from them, and exaggerate our own superior faculties, whilst they eclipse us even in those excellencies which we so loudly arrogate?

NOR have we only heard of one selected from a number, but a whole female nation, who not only excelled in manly virtues, but preserved likewise the dignity and character of their own sex. For it is recorded, that the Spartan matrons were accustomed to inspect the wounds of their sons; and if these appeared to have been received in an honourable advance towards the enemy, they used to lead the funeral procession with transports, and to deposite the dead in the tombs of their ancestors: but, on the contrary, those who seemed to be wounded in a dishonourable retreat, were so far from being esteemed by their mothers worthy of a public funeral, and the honours due to the dead, that they were privately buried. So powerful, even in female minds, is the sense of honour, and the desire of fame.

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FROM the same nation, there is likewise transmitted to our times the noble behaviour of a mother, who beholding her son transfixed with six mortal wounds, neither attempted to breathe one sigh, nor took the wreath from her head, but, turning to her companions, spoke thus: "How much more beautiful and eligible is it for a hero to breathe out his victorious soul in a glorious conflict, than, after having conquered in the Olympic games, to live possessed of all the honours attending such a conquest?"

ANOTHER hearing that her son fell in battle, said, "It was for this end I bore him, that, on a proper occasion, he might, without reluctance, offer his life a willing sacrifice to his country."

IN what rank would you place these women, who, inflamed with thirst of glory, and anxiously concerned for the honour of their country, preferred a noble death to every prospect of advantage and security? What degrees of honour would be too high? what public gratulations too warm for them? Tell me, then, shall the Roman yield to the Spartan virtue? Equal perhaps it is, if you would not call it superior.

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How brave! how sublime was the saying of Cornelia! who having now lost twelve objects of maternal fondness, when she saw her sons Tiberius and Caius slain, said, without the least terror or dejection, "It is sufficient to place me above the reach of infelicity, that I am the mother of the Gracchi." A woman truly noble, and equal even to the most illustrious of antiquity, either for the extent of her mind, or greatness of her soul: for she did not yield to grief, but rather having conquered that weakness, by the force of her virtue, she exulted in her victory, and justly celebrated the triumph of her own magnanimity.

COMPARED with this our wonder lessens even at Rutilia, who having lost her son Caius Cotta, in his own country, after his return from an exile into which she had fondly pursued him, was not observed by any one to drop a tear, when she saw him conveyed to the pile in funeral procession.

SUCH likewise was the fortune of Clodia, who destined to the calamity of surviving her son Brutus, of consular rank, bore his fate not without courage and patience.

THESE are instances of uncommon virtue in women, and will be thought worthy of admiration by any one who considers the softness

ness and imbecillity of that sex. But when we are informed who gave them birth, and from what glorious ancestors they are descended, we naturally expect to find them equal, in every thing illustrious or sublime, to their noble origin.

CAN any thing then be so immensely valuable, can any advantage under heaven merit so much regard, that, when it is lost, we should accumulate the misfortune, by losing likewise the use of our rational powers? If these have the smallest residence in our souls, they will ever teach us to rekindle our own languid virtue, by reviewing the grandeur of their progenitors; nor whilst we contemplate the Pisones, Fabii, Bruti, and Marcelli, can we ever be forgetful who are the proper objects of our imitation, and to whom we owe our descent. By their arms, the boundaries of our empire were extended; by their blood, was liberty purchased and confirmed: it is, in short, by their indefatigable toil, and incessant care, that the commonwealth has raised itself to a height so sublime, both in martial glory and every private virtue. These, these are the paths which every one must tread, who would merit praise by their lives, and be engaged in honourable enterprises, nor suffer themselves to be seduced,

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by any infatuation of mind, to immoderate grief or weakness.

WE have named great and famous men of foreign countries, we have also collected a great number from our own, to whom the prospect of death was not only divested of its pain and horror, but became even pleasing and agreeable. You may likewise, if you please, add Theramenes, who, with the greatest serenity of soul, having drunk a bowl of poison, diverted himself in death, and drank to Cretia with what remained in the cup. Did then a man of such extensive wisdom and conspicuous fame amuse himself in death; and shall we be dissolved in tears and lamentations, when our children and our friends undergo the same unavoidable vicissitude? And whilst we read, whilst we treasure in our memories, whilst we admire the sayings of the ancients for the wisdom and virtue of which they are so expressive, shall we be so absurd and inconsistent, as to despise the examples which the same persons have left us? Shall we neglect that life which succeeds our impending death, whose duration is to eternity, whose entertainment is perfect happiness, and whose privilege absolute immunity from all misery? For though the soul, issuing as from its hive, leaves the body insensible,

fible, and stripped of every former embellishment; though, after having once passed the inviolable barrier, we can no more return from death to the enjoyment of our estates, our riches, or our power; or, as the poet sings,

Though, taught by barb'rous hands sublime to rise,
Our sculptur'd domes invade the distant skies,
Whose op'ning valves the splendid scene display
Of gilded ceilings and apartments gay;
From all their pomp the dead no joy receive,
Gold rusts, and beauty withers in the grave:

yet the souls of the pious shall possess, by an eternal and inviolable tenor, goods infinitely more substantial, and treasures infinitely more precious; treasures incorruptible by time, incapable of change, above the reach of violence.

BUT that we may dwell no longer on the examples of eminent men, nor the memory of their virtues as committed to history, let us come to what every one who has reason and consciousness may perceive. Let us inquire, from the experience and nature of things, what advantages, what improvements of our situation we may expect from death. By which manner of reasoning and teaching, the light of truth is more easily and perspicuously discovered, and things, whether considered singly,

gly, or with relation to each other, are more distinctly perceived. If there is any one who can obtain and secure a prosperous issue in all the affairs of life, if he has no reverse of fortune to dread, no person could reprehend him if he affirmed, as he ought with justice, that, on a great many accounts, he preferred life to death. But so far from being capable of separating calamity and misery from the whole of life, there is no man existent who can promise himself tranquillity and happiness even for half an hour. Every one hopes for the fortune of Metellus; numbers wish to possess the kingdom, and obtain the numerous progeny of Priam: As if Metellus, rich as he was in a considerable family of children and grandchildren, had not been snatched reluctant from life, even when his prospect of happiness was at its height; and as if Priam, robbed of all his offspring, sunk beneath the burden of insupportable distress, had not fallen a victim to hostile hands. These, if a milder destiny had abridged their term of life but a few years, might have been rescued at once from numberless calamities, and exquisite pains, which descended with bitterness upon their hoary heads; for this very reason, because their period of life was prolonged beyond their destined

tioned portion of happiness. Hence these lamentable strains :

I saw the conflagration boundless rage ;
 I saw the king, depress'd with griefs and age,
 Amidst his children's blood, his court on fire,
 Beneath a barb'rous hand his soul expire ;
 I saw the altar of the power supreme
 Deform'd in gore, and wrapt in hostile flame.

Events not only terrible to be seen, but bitter even when only heard off. What idea can we form of the king's distress, whom inevitable destiny reserved to hear, to see, to feel, all this variety of wo? Would it not have been a much more favourable event for him, had he lost his life a number of years before the arrival of such adverse occurrences?

PERHAPS it may be said, that, by protracting life, he obtained many enjoyments, of which a more abrupt departure must have deprived him. But he would have been happily delivered, not only from evils which more than balance his enjoyments, but from catastrophes which have scarcely been exhibited in the scene of human nature either before or since his time. From all which, and many other arguments, it is clear, that men mistake the real source of human happiness, when they either

ther separate felicity from death, or associate misery with it.

FROM what a complication of trouble and inconveniency did a sudden death rescue L. Crassus, amongst the most eminent of his time, whether considered as a man, or as an orator? For such was his filial regard to his country, that, had he survived, he must have felt intolerable anguish from the public misfortunes which succeeded his fate: because Italy was in a conflagration of war, the senate inflamed with unextinguishable emulation; in short, there was no rank of the state which did not feel, even to its inmost essence, the calamities of that period. For why should I rehearse the flight of Marius? why recapitulate the other misfortunes, so replete with grief, so deserving of commiseration, which happened in his retreat? why recall to memory his return? that return so deeply stained with blood and murder, which no human being can recollect, without feeling his soul chilled, and even petrified, with ineffable horror. For I either retain in my own remembrance the impression, or at least from the archives of our ancestors I can perceive, what a horrible carnage distinguished that time: how the best citizens, the noblest patriots were slaughtered; how their
heads

heads were cut off, and fixed on poles in the most conspicuous parts of the city, who, by their eloquence, had ascertained the dignity, and procured the safety of many amongst their worthy compatriots. Many innocent and worthy characters could I enumerate, who, during that inexorable tempest of the commonwealth, were under a cruel necessity of flying at once from their lives and misfortunes, and of exploring their native liberty in the arms of death. How sad and dreadful then was the state of the commonwealth! how bitter and intolerable the conditions of life! who can recollect them without the most sincere and sensible regret! when you might have beheld those very persons, who, at the expence of their blood and toil, had assisted, increased, nay preserved the republic, every where deprived of safety, and expecting, with dread, with horror, their impending fate, from the unnatural hands and swords of their own relations! Now, when you survey the mournful accidents, the terrible catastrophes, which happen to those by whose assistance and interposition you have been preserved; whilst you feel it out of your power by any means to become their auxiliary, or give them relief; who will assert, that, by persons in these circumstances, death is not rather

rather to be embraced than declined? But they who, by the beneficence of Fate, have anticipated the cruel flames of such a tempestuous period, and found an agreeable asylum in death, must be universally and justly esteemed happy. Now that L. Crassus was one of this number, appears sufficiently evident, from the fact itself, to render all other proofs deducible from eloquence or reason superfluous.

THESE events, however, are too remote from the present times, to be easily recollected or comprehended by the mind of every one. But in the whole annals of the Roman state, what is more universally known, what more illustrious and striking, than the unhappy fate of my intimate friend Pompey? or what could be more conspicuous, more exactly perceptible to every discerning eye, and every attentive mind? Him, if death had seasonably rescued, no evil would have pursued, no misfortune invaded. But, alas! the length of his life proved the real cause of his being exhibited as a singular spectacle of misery on this theatre of suffering mortality; who felt the severities and bitterness of fortune with so much greater weight, as he had been more successful and happy through the whole of his former life. For who, among all the Romans, was once
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more distinguished? Who was more illustrious, either in the arts of peace, the enterprizes of war, or the posts of honour, which, with unprecedented rapidity, were conferred upon him? On whom were the gifts of fortune, the pleasures of friendship, the advantages of alliance, more profusely accumulated? Had he been blessed with an agreeable and decent transition from life, he must have reached the highest point, the perfection of human felicity. But, from the dreadful reverse which he suffered, we may see how extensive is the power of vindictive fortune in the revolutions of life; unless we rather imagine all possible evils, all disagreeable vicissitudes, to be the hard terms of our existence here, and natural to a state of being, too painful, too much the object of compassion at its best. For he who had enjoyed the most distinguished prosperity, who had been accustomed to nothing but projecting the noblest plans and entertaining the most extensive wishes, who possessed all the advantages and pleasures of life even to superfluity, entered into hostilities against his father-in-law; he deserted his house, he fled from Italy: And though, in his former wars, he had pursued no enterprise but with exact prudence and consummate wisdom; yet when the force of

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his genius, the extent of his intellectual powers ought to have been uncommonly exerted, and appeared in their highest lustre, even then he had almost forgot himself. In this unlucky juncture, he did not hesitate to oppose the strongest and best disciplined legions in the Roman army, with troops effeminate in their nature, cowardly in their dispositions, new to war, and collected at random. Thus his army being lost, his camp taken, and himself ingloriously conquered, this great man fell into the hands of slaves. But how unhappily he was deprived of life, it is unnecessary to relate; as perhaps it was the greatest alleviation of his misery, that, after having fallen into such deep and complicated wretchedness, his fate did not linger, but was precipitant. Happy would his exit have proved, had he departed whilst he was eminent in the state; when, by the favour of his country, his personal authority and political influence were extensive; when wealth and abundance seemed to court his acceptance. Nor would it alone be impossible for the most exuberant pen to describe, but even for the most fruitful imagination to conceive, what deep distress, what ineffable misery, his protracted life subjected him to sustain.

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HAVING therefore irrefragably evinced and established this maxim, that death frequently proves a happy and a seasonable refuge, not only because it introduces us to a state of exquisite and immutable felicity, but likewise because it delivers us from the pangs of such complicated and bitter adversity as may arise from our present situation, or kindly rescues us from such griefs and calamities as may impend ; what reason can be assigned why we should not rejoice from our souls at the prospect of expiring, and imitate the immoveable constancy of such great men, as are not disconcerted by the fate of any one ? Did not L. Brutus esteem death the best and happiest acquisition, when, in repulsing the tyrant whom he had formerly banished, he thought life a small sacrifice for the liberty of his country ? Were not these likewise the sentiments of the Decii, who, in an engagement with the Latins for the freedom and happiness of their native city, offered their voluntary bosoms to the weapons of the enemy, and fell the self-devoted victims of glory and liberty ? Did not these divine impressions, these exalted motives, likewise animate Scipio, Paulus, Marcellus, and Albinus, whom the records of human nature will ever distinguish, for being

nobly prodigal of life in the field of battle, when their country's cause demanded such a tribute?

NOR has life any attractions to prevent it from being despised by men of sublime and elevated souls, in pursuit of eternal and immaculate renown; for surely the everlasting praise and admiration of all rational beings is more than sufficient to recompense the momentary pains of death, if at all they deserve that name. For though we formerly mentioned this topic, that the dying either suffer very little uneasiness, or none at all; yet as, at that time, we only hinted the subject, it may here be proper to resume the matter, and treat it more diffusely. Nor does the maxim of that person appear to me absurd, who affirmed, that the different states and situations of the dying and the dead, might be clearly perceived and apprehended from two circumstances: One of these, according to him, is a period of profound and unconscious sleep; the other, that which is antecedent to our birth. And in reality this is the case, that, of all false opinions by which the vulgar are misled, none approaches nearer to truth than the notions which they entertain of death, discovered in their conduct, when considered relative to that critical transition; For many live in such a manner, as most effectually to
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enjoy present advantages ; nor do they trouble themselves in exploring futurity, that they may anticipate what agreeable and disagreeable contingencies shall attend themselves or others. They are therefore frequently tormented with unexpected diseases of body, or unforeseen vexations and perturbations of spirit. But the last event of life, upon which their meditations ought particularly to be fixed, they seldom recollect, as if at all relative to them, or as if they were in the least interested in it. These, as Panætius relates the apothegm of Africanus, were like stubborn horses, who should be consigned to the hands of severe discipline, that, by degrees, they might learn to obey, and acquire more gentleness and mansuetude. In the same manner, these inflexible patients of wisdom and virtue, should be checked, impelled, and whirled around the ring, till they have confirmed those habits of patience and fortitude, that may enable them, if death should take them by surprise, to sustain it without terror or dejection.

I KNOW not, however, by what fascination of pleasure and luxury, human life and manners have insensibly declined from that sacred integrity, that inviolable rectitude, observed by our ancestors ; and are at length so effectually depraved,

depraved, that nothing is less the object of common concern than truth : nor are we conscious in any of our transactions, whether virtue will authorise them or not ; than which no plague more incurable, no curse more dreadful could have infested human life, alas ! already too much degenerated. And if in any characters at all, certainly in those which have now been drawn, the common maxim will be found strictly true and accurately conceived. For in what mighty actions are these triflers engaged, unless to consume whole days in idleness and folly ; so that their existence here, may rather be called a *convulsive dream*, than *real life*. For as he who slumbers perceives nothing, does nothing, is concerned in nothing ; so it will not be easy to conceive what the dead can feel, perform, or regard. Thus, in poetical legends, we are told, that when any one was uncommonly dear to Heaven, he was lulled by the Immortals into a profound sleep, that they might intercept the shock of some inevitable calamity, which, if awake, he must have felt in all its bitterness. If therefore dying be like sleeping, every night is to us a temporary death ; and if, in these moments of profound repose, no sensibility remains, by analogy we may safely and certainly conclude, that there is no sensibility
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of corporeal pain or pleasure in the grave : which, as it is plain to common sense, so neither can we doubt the other position, since, to us, the period that precedes our birth, cannot be different from that which succeeds our dissolution ; and the state of him who has not been, must be the same with that of him who was, and is no more. Because, since death can have no relation to him whose existence has not yet commenced, so neither can it in the least concern him who is already expired. Nay, even in the crisis of dying, it is either of little moment, or none at all, since its empire is confined to so short a space, such a limited succession of indivisible instants, that should it be disposed to heighten or protract its malignity, this procedure would be found impracticable. What then shall we think concerning the unmeaning exaggerations of those, who continually tell us, what pangs, what convulsions, they dread in death ? Yet, after all, I see not how they can do otherwise ; for since man can die but once, it is not to be expected that they who are ignorant of the passage from life, nor have ever explored the undiscovered country, from whose confines no traveller returns, can clearly perceive or determine whether death be a good or an evil.

THEY

THEY say, that the dying are excruciated, convulsed, distorted with anguish, which, in some cases, may possibly have been seen and observed ; as the heavings, tremours, and convulsive starts appearing in the frame, seem to be symptoms of agony. And perhaps these animadversions might merit some regard, if the appearances then exhibited were found to be really significant of what is felt in death. For if in death the body were tormented, and agonizing with such intolerable pangs, as obliged it to exhibit such terrible signs of painful sensation, it would not certainly be denied, that death itself gives no small degree of torture. But since this bitterness and anguish is only the portion of a few, whose lives have been one scene of riot and intemperance, one succession of criminal perpetrations and execrable wickedness, we can no longer hesitate in concluding, that the agitations of such wretches are not caused by the pangs of death, but by the sharper pangs, the more insupportable hell of conscious guilt ; from that accursed source is derived their impatient solicitude, their intense despair. For they who vainly flattered themselves that they were superior to the lot of mortality, nor could believe themselves expiring even when the grim tyrant knocked at their

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their hearts, are not so much affected with the pains of death, as enraged to be dragged, reluctant, from life; in which, as they have been prosperous and successful even to their most sanguine wishes, it is natural and unavoidable for them to fear, that, in death, they shall experience the most dreadful alternatives, the fiercest extremes of adverse fate. But to the good, who habitually think and talk of death as a placid and serene harbour from the tempest of life, and who have frequently and ardently desired to escape, by the beneficent interposition of Fate, from the storms and hurricanes of a tumultuous and fluctuating world, to them nothing can be more delightful, nothing more pleasing, than the hopes, the very name of death. And in them we may plainly perceive the interventions of Heaven, which support them in the kindest and most admirable manner. Thus you will find a number of those who have lived the faithful adherents of virtue and goodness, not only departing from life with little pain, which is the general wish, but even free from every uneasiness, without hesitation: Amongst which number let me mention Q. Fabius, who, after having obtained the consulship, when he saluted in the senate-house those who passed, so far from suffering, so far

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from feeling any thing disagreeable, he even left the world in visible transport and exultation. The same event happened to A. Pompey whilst he sacrificed in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and likewise to Thalmas the consul when supplicating the immortal Gods. What pain can you imagine that they felt, even in the very crisis of dissolution, who, immediately before, discovered the greatest cheerfulness and spirit, and who, in the very instant of time when they died, exhibited no symptoms of dejection, nor uttered the least word significant of regret?

You tell me, They are absorbed, annihilated in death. I answer, They were men distinguished for virtue and wisdom, on whom the benignity of Heaven bestowed the favour of death, as an entrance to a better and happier life; which perhaps, in the omniscient eye, might appear more acceptable to them, as sent at a period when they had little reason to hope, much less to expect so great a good. For as death depends entirely on the Divine Will, it can never be in the power of man to chuse at what hour, and in what situation he would most ardently wish to breathe his last.

NOR is it true, which some maintain, that the fixed hour, the critical moment of dissolution

tion is determined for human nature in general, by divine decree, beyond which it cannot pass, nor stop on this side, whilst the lives of particular persons may be protracted or abridged by their negligence, intemperance, or other contingencies. For as this is most certain, that the utmost limit of life is pre-determined by God, which it is impossible for any one to remove or elude; thus none can certainly affirm, that the same hour, the same termination of life is destined for all. And indeed should we acknowledge this principle, there would be no reason for ascribing to any man, either prudence, temperance, or piety; for all the virtues, if such a consequence be properly deduced, would be not only quite useless, but absolutely chimerical. For how could any man exert prudence? why should he practise the discipline of restraint? where is the necessity of regulating his sensual appetites, if he is mechanically directed in the same career, to the same goal of life, which is common to all his brethren? You will tell me, he is endued with these virtues, that, by them, he may prolong his life; but if the term of life is pre-established by Fate, it must for that reason be immutable. If, however, our final period be in any degree influenced by spontaneous agency and human volition,

there can be no reason why any one should affirm, that the same period is pre-ordained by God for all.

BUT concerning these metaphysical intricacies, let every one adopt what opinion he pleases: What is most agreeable to truth, God only knows. In my apprehension, our nature is not indulged with *data* sufficient to decide the the question with absolute certainty. Let us only fix this, that there is no pain in death; but that it is productive of such advantages and enjoyments to man, as perhaps, though they may be hoped for by many, can yet be comprehended by none. It is therefore impressed on the human mind, by a divine impulse, that as often as it feels the bitterness of misfortune, it not only wishes for death with all its ardour, but even importunes Heaven, with premeditated petitions, to obtain that happy immunity. Why should it be so, unless this were a plain declaration of nature, extorted by sensation and experience, proclaiming the utility and advantages of death? But it seems to be engraven by the hands of its Author on the human intellect, that there can be no evil, no bitterness in death. Nor are the instinctive impulses of self-preservation, since only designed for temporary purposes, any objection to this.

this. When, therefore, pain exagitates, or grief depresses our spirits, we earnestly solicit death, and desire it with our whole souls, as the only possible resource of sufferings and afflictions.

BUT the topic of which I now treat gives me an opportunity that ought not to pass unimproved; for since it has been established, that no person ought to be much disturbed with death, may we not with much better reason contend, that these ought least of all to be moved, who have it in their power to console themselves by a death gloriously obtained? For that life ought to be esteemed sufficiently long which concludes with honour; and they who, during their sojourn in this world, have inflexibly held the paths of virtue, are not only in their exit pursued with applause, but even with eternal pleasure and delight; and, in proportion as we have exerted our power in the performance of our duty, or in discharging the offices of life with honour, so much more intensely shall the soul be transported and elevated with these heavenly sensations. For surely as man was originally formed for rectitude of action, and on that account adorned and invested with a degree of reason superior to all the other participants of animal life in this world,
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there can be no other source from whence he ought to explore the true estimate of his character, or derive the most exquisite pleasures of his being, than from a course of virtuous actions. Is it possible that he can forget whence his origin is deduced? Certainly he can neither be unmindful of the dignity of his extract, and the nature of his frame, nor die with anguish and regret, who having passed a life of integrity and honour, leaves the impressions of his existence and virtues deep in the souls of all who knew him. With what divine rapture, what ineffable transports must we imagine the virtuous soul exults, when emancipated from the galling chains, the tenacious fetters of her corporeal prison, she soars on high to regain her congenial abode, her native element, the regions of eternal light and glory, from whence she descended! For certainly our souls are emanations of the Divine Mind, confined and struggling in this terrestrial mass, whose dead and inactive weight checks their native elasticity, oppressed with corporeal organs: But when, disengaged from matter, they return to their congenial habitations, then indeed they are conscious of real and immortal life: nor are they longer subjected to the despotism of relentless pain, sordid pleasure, or ungratified desire;

desire; but, blessed with the full and complete possession of themselves, they are tormented by no contingency, importuned by no want, passive to nothing, but moving and actuating every thing.

WITH propriety is it therefore said, that the body is mere earth, the soul celestial and immortal flame; a truth which the virtuous lives of great men, and their noble actions, sufficiently testify. For how should the man who thinks himself born to no higher inheritance than those mortal and turbid elements, which he touches with his hands, or spurns with his feet, be able to despise the accommodations and advantages of his present state? How should he be proof to the allurements of sensual pleasure, or shed his blood in the cause of virtue, and pursuit of honour?

HENCE it must be false, that the whole man can be equally subject to mortality; for as the body is a mere concretion of earth, it must feel the attraction of earthly possessions and enjoyments, till it returns to the bosom of its maternal element. But the heaven-descended soul, by its native tendency, aspires to things that are immortal and heavenly; nor are its aims and wishes circumscribed by the same narrow limits with those of the body.

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IT can therefore never be said to taste the sweets of real life, nor enjoy absolute and inviolable repose, whilst imprisoned in the body. Like a reluctant captive, it regrets the chains of its terrestrial dungeon, and the pollution of matter. What a sacred change! how important a revolution of our existence! to be at once delivered from the toils and adversities of life! to be wrapped in the bosom of tranquillity, amidst the painful vicissitudes, the circling calamities which involved us! and as if escaped from the severe duration, the intolerable servitude of life, to regain the habitations of boundless freedom and profuse delight! For to these divine anticipations we must refer the sentiments of philosophers, when they discourse concerning the sacred tranquillity of the pious, and the supreme beatitude, which, after their departure from this world, they are said so completely and perpetually to enjoy: who as they understood that men were not created and placed here by blind or undesigned contingency, nor that the same retribution could be justly given to men of worth and virtue, (who having drained the bitter cup of adversity, expired in the midst of pangs), as to these wretches whose desires are fixed, nay whose very souls are for ever intent upon projecting
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and perpetrating the most detestable wickedness ; for this reason, they could not imagine, that the same serene and gentle exit from life, nor the same glory and felicity after death, was promiscuously bestowed on both.

LET me therefore indulge the dear recollection, let my soul imbibe all the refreshment and consolation with which it is pregnant, since I am conscious that my dear departed daughter, whose virtues at once deserved and justified the highest degree of paternal fondness, lived in such a manner, that neither the purity of her morals, nor the extent of her wisdom, could admit any accession; and in such a manner too she died, that, on the rack of nature, in the most excruciating pangs of childbirth, which produced her final catastrophe, she discovered the most unshaken fortitude, the noblest exaltation of soul: which remembrance, though not quite divested of all its bitterness, is yet mingled with sensations of comfort and satisfaction, as it occurs when the tide of grief is in its ebb, though still the surges have not quite forgot to swell. How indeed should my situation be different, since my lovely child could suffer no evil in death? nor was my affliction incongruous to nature, but such as all who feel the lot of humanity

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might partake. Why should its emotions disturb and agitate my soul with sorrow, beyond what a susceptible nature ought to discover? What therefore remains for me? since, under the kind tuition, and by the gracious assistance of Heaven, she has nobly performed the part assigned her here below; What? but to transfer my wishes, my contemplations, nay my soul itself, to that sublimer and happier state of existence, which I now believe she enjoys, in every conscious power; which I believe, did I say? let me retract the faint assertion, let me give way to truth, and boldly affirm, that I feel it.

THIS meditation will for ever be a source of more intense and copious pleasure to my heart, as the state which she now unquestionably enjoys in its perfection, is more sublime and exalted than the most refined and enlarged felicity compatible with human life. For what portion of good may not the dear deceased be thought to merit, whose intentions and actions had no tincture, no participation of evil; and who suffered the pains, the misfortunes to which in life she was exposed, with a disposition so patient and resigned, that her acquiescence in the will of Heaven was no less habitually discovered in adverse than in prosperous

ous occurrences; whilst, in the fulness of her soul, she poured forth her sincere acknowledgments to the immortal Gods for both? And though her whole heart and understanding were employed in fulfilling the great and important ends of virtue; yet, pleased with the enjoyment of conscious worth alone, she did not ostentatiously exert her beneficence, but, with sincere and unassuming modesty, declined the praise and approbation which she merited.

MUST I not therefore think, that so pure a spirit was highly acceptable to the Deity, and blessed with his full approbation; since in life it was so little influenced by selfish regards, so constantly and ardently solicitous to cultivate and improve its own rectitude, and to perform the great tasks of humanity and justice, as the sole end of its existence; in whom the living and visible portraiture of virtue appeared, not as we frequently see it, the result of laborious hypocrisy and false imitation, but such as it shines in Heaven, genuine, deep, and substantial? For as the benignity of nature so kindly and justly had tempered her frame, that she pursued whatever was beautiful or fit in human conduct with a spontaneous motion, and innate propensity; yet, not contented with this favourable constitution, she endeavoured, by

the utmost exertions of reason, the most invariable attention to wisdom, that she might be able to render these faithful impulses of nature unnecessary. Whoever, therefore, had more nearly explored the manners which she adopted, and the plan of life which she pursued; whoever had observed her consummate prudence in the government of her family, her manly genius in all the affairs of life, her profound and comprehensive learning, would have acknowledged, that she wanted none of those advantages so loudly arrogated by our assuming sex, which are either discovered in the estimation and discernment of things in general, or in the proper and exact discharge of domestic administration. Hence it was, that in prudence and magnanimity, virtues which we ourselves, with all our masculine vanity, too frequently want, she, though a woman, so eminently excelled, that, far from pursuing extrinsic remedies for her grief, looking within herself for all her resources, on her own virtue alone she depended, and by her own virtue alone she was sustained.

FARTHER, as the diseases of the soul are more severe, more permanent than those of the body, so much ought our surprise to increase, when we find a woman, a soft and delicate woman, superior

superior to every corporeal infirmity by her fortitude, and to every perturbation of mind by her wisdom. Hence it was, that though her filial sympathy for the calamities of her father, though the uneasiness which she suffered from the disorders of the times were great, yet never could my watchful tenderness perceive her mind disconcerted, nor her spirit dejected. Her soul deeply felt the regret of her father's banishment, she partook the sorrow diffused through her whole family, she saw with afflicted eyes the confiscation of my fortune; but, with tender assiduity, she constantly assisted her mother in every exigence, by the wisest deliberations and maturest advices; nay, even when the posture of our affairs appeared most critical and dangerous, she did not hesitate to inspire her relations with hopes of my return. Our common distress, therefore, was not a more exuberant source of bitterness and wo, than the pleasure and satisfaction which we constantly felt from the unruffled sweetness, the exquisite sensibility, the sympathetic piety of a child so dearly beloved.

WERE my heart to consult its own interest and conveniency, did I listen to the dictates of paternal affection, the pleadings of nature which are so strongly and universally felt, surely

ly I must have wished that pleasure and satisfaction still continued : but when I revolve in my breast, her freedom from the chains of the body, her exemption from all possible misery, the secure possession of eternal being, I not only feel the throbs of paternal regret subside, but even contemplate her improved situation with heartfelt joy. For what more delightful idea can I indulge, whilst my reason tells me that my soul is immortal, than in reflecting with firm persuasion, that my daughter shall for ever exist, and for ever participate every sublime enjoyment of which intelligent beings are capacious and susceptible?

Now, that the soul is immortal, I must believe without hesitation ; nor am I unwilling to collect the sentiments of the wise and contemplative upon this important subject, since the current of my ideas has insensibly transported me to it. Nor do I imagine the opinion so weakly supported by reason, that it should be necessary to call in such auxiliary arguments as these, that there still remains, even in the bodies of the dead, such signatures of beauty and dignity, such impressions of indefatigable energy, as must inspire us with veneration, and, instead of inducing us to think that the soul ultimately perishes with the body, rather seem to signify,
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that the body is her living tomb, and that she remains in a state of sepulture, whilst her powers are envelopped in its darkness and inactivity; as if it were not plain from numberless and convincing arguments, that he who maintains the soul to be only coeval with the body, and involved in the same ruin, combats the whole force of reason, without being supported by any one rational deduction.

BUT were it necessary to support this principle by authority, what name more important, more venerable, could I select, than his whom Apollo himself pronounced the wisest of men? whose declared and fixed opinion it was, that the souls of men were divine intelligences, and that, when emancipated from the body, they return to that heaven whence they originally descended. This, in every conversation, he firmly and invariably asserted; in which he agreed with those philosophers, whom antiquity distinguished by the name of the *Italic School*, and on whom it bestowed high marks of esteem. Amongst them it was a fixed and unquestionable tenet, that the human soul was of celestial origin; and that she was not only a gift, but even a real and intimate part of the eternal and all-productive Mind.

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NOR, if any one should think otherwise, would he find it easy to invalidate the powerful and numerous arguments which support this doctrine. For thus it may be perceived and concluded, even with the evidence of sensible perception, that there is in the soul an inexpressible energy, an almost incredible velocity, by whose assistance, with a glance of thought, and in the same indivisible instant of time, she can not only comprehend, but project, revolve, and digest such a course of action, as the body cannot accomplish in a succession of months; months did I say? nay not even in revolutions of years.

BUT if this should appear wonderful, why may we not explore the treasures of memory with increasing surprise? Is it not still more strange, that the soul should be able to collect and comprehend a series of events, so infinite, so complex, and deduced from such remote antiquity? that, by exerting her visual powers, she can pervade the awful gloom that intercepts the determinations of Fate from our view, and presage what shall happen; nay that, like the omniscient Mind, she can unite, and almost comprehend, the past, the present, and the future, in one unbounded prospect. Who that feels and recognises these qualities in his
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own soul, can doubt that she is of divine extraction? and, if so, must he not also confess, that whatever partakes the divine nature is immortal and imperishable; since, particularly from two attributes essential to mind, its inextinguishable nature may be certainly investigated, and clearly perceived?

ONE of these is, a principle of intrinsic activity, a power of beginning and continuing motion, which must be acknowledged inherent in the soul, and even constituent of her being. For as she is moved by her own innate force, nor borrows the first impulse of motion from without, like other mechanical agents; and as the highest marks of incessant activity are evidently perceptible, since, even whilst the body is in the profoundest sleep, the soul is assiduously and apparently exerted; for this reason the divinity of its essence, and the eternity of its duration, cannot admit the smallest doubt.

THIS conclusion the whole force of reason, this the ultimate tendency of things, unavoidably extort. For surely the soul is an image of God, the participant of his nature, and the product of his power. But if God himself, by the necessity of his nature, enjoys immortality, why should he decree, that a part which he spontaneously abstracted from himself should

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be mortal? By this very instance then, he has thought proper to display the pre-eminence of divine power, that he is not only essentially immortal himself, but capable of investing other beings with his own nature, and of making them also, by that participation, immortal.

NEVERTHELESS he determined that the body should be mortal. Nor was that constitution improper, as it takes its rise from earth, to whose transmutations all sublunary forms are subjected, and, when the course of life is finished, must resolve into the same element. But the soul being of divine origin, incessantly aspires to heaven as its natal clime; for it constantly wishes to repossess that habitation from whence it had formerly departed.

IF, however, it is a property essential to either of the two, that it should gravitate to earth as its ultimate repose, it must peculiarly be the property of the body. But the soul, by its natural tendency, must explore an eternal habitation in heaven, for heaven is the country of souls: because no modification of matter can give birth to mind, since there is nothing in it which indicates its existence resulting from mixture, from concretion, or from any artificial and temporary composition of parts; so that,

that, in its whole frame, not one quality can be found, which intimates its structure and formation to be terrestrial. Nor has it the least analogy with the fluidity of water, the elasticity of air, or the corrosive violence of fire; for in these essences, however modified, there is not the least ray of intelligence, reflection, or memory. Now these qualities are necessarily constituent of mind, by whose operations she retains the past, presages the future, and comprehends the present, which are attributes of Deity alone; nor can we conceive whence man could derive them, unless from God himself. The nature and energy of the soul are therefore absolutely peculiar, and entirely different from these existences and powers which are familiar to our observation, and communicated by our external senses.

WHATEVER therefore it is which is endued with the powers of perception and volition, in which the principles of health and activity are inherent, this must derive its origin from heaven, this must participate the divine nature, and, by necessary consequence, be immortal. Nor can God himself, whose existence and perfections we conclude from the frame of nature and our own, be conceived in any other manner, than as an omnipresent

mind; whose operations are boundless and free; whose contexture is incapable of divisibility, like other temporary beings which subsist by the concretion of dissoluble parts; which perceives and communicates motion to every thing, but is itself endued with endless and indefatigable energy. To the human soul therefore, which is an emanation of his own nature, we must conclude, that he has communicated the same eternity.

NOR will its designing powers, its wonderful exertions, lead us to any other determination, but that its nature is divine, and its duration endless. Why else do we project plans, and exert desires, so far beyond the limits of our present state? For whether we chuse to consider the extent and magnificence of elegant buildings, or the laborious productions of genius and learning, or the immense quantity of money bestowed in procuring such acquisitions as are esteemed most permanent and established in their nature, or our avidity of extensive, multiplied, and durable possessions, we may certainly infer, that no man would either conceive, or labour to accomplish such enterprises, unless he was persuaded, that not only a long series of time, but even eternity itself was the inheritance of his being. Nay, the very insatiable
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NATURAL RELIGION. III

desire of everlasting fame, the inextinguishable thirst of honour, the assiduous pursuit of wealth and influence, evidently show that the soul of man extends her prospect even to boundless futurity; nor circumscribes her desires by the wants and gratifications of animal life, like other beings of inferior rank, but esteems these pursuits as abject, contemptible, and only suitable to the limits of a momentary and contingent existence.

WHAT shall we think of these sublime and pre-eminent qualities, which are indulged to no other creature that lives upon earth but man alone? On him alone is bestowed the power of contemplating heaven and celestial things: it is his peculiar province to explore the depths of knowledge, and enjoy its discoveries, which either contribute to the culture and improvement of his virtue, or to the detection of these laws that regulate the revolutions of the sun and other heavenly bodies; or to preserve the memory of remote antiquity, and make the proper application of such improvements as have been obtained in the obscurest parts of science. Are not these plain indications of the soul's divinity? Do not their extent and importance obviously show, that the nature which they invest must be derived
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from heaven, since it has imbibed so liberal a portion of celestial excellence?

CAN we imagine, if the soul were destined to sink in a gloomy annihilation when the body dies, that the best and wisest of men would resign their lives with such equality of temper, while profligates and fools shiver on the verge of time with such ineffable horror, such deep regret? It is said, that Socrates, even to his last moment, entertained his friends and disciples with an account of the serene recess, the happy immortality, which attend the good and pious; and that, animated by these prospects, he drank the poisoned cup with as much cheerfulness and alacrity, as if he had not been expelled to the silence and darkness of the tomb, but called to assume the splendor and dignity of sovereign empire. Yet they whose souls are prone to earth, and grovelling in the dust, whose thoughts never rise above its sordid pursuits and contemptible pleasures, are invariably observed to show the most inflexible repugnance, the most ungraceful aversion in their departure from life. Nor is this conduct unnatural, whilst, as the scene of immortality opens to their immediate prospect, they already feel the rack of inconceivable anguish, and anticipate those eternal punishments which are
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the consequences of a guilty and flagitious life.

WHEN we contemplate the inattention of man to those latent prepossessions of immortality, which are so legible in a number of their actions, may we not justly exclaim, "O fools! O ignorant of what concerns you most, even the dignity and glory of your nature!" since it can be hid from no attentive spectator, that the funeral obsequies, deifications, and other sacred rites transmitted from our ancestors, were plainly, nay articulately expressive of the soul's everlasting existence. Nor would they have worshipped the dead with such divine honours, nor handed down from generation to generation such a multiplicity and variety of sepulchral rites, unless from a firm and intuitive persuasion that the soul survived in death, and that the whole man was not overwhelmed in the wrecks of the body.

HENCE they seem to have determined, that death was not the ultimate scene in the human drama, nor followed by the absolute and final extinction of our being; but that it was rather the province of that fable herald to receive, in their exit, those who live agreeably to the laws of God and nature, that he might introduce them to more substantial, permanent, and exalted

alted happiness. For whoever have lived congruous to the dictates of nature, nor are impressed with the stains which men too early and deeply contract from the corrupted customs and manners of the world ; stains that obscure the sacred and informing radiance originally kindled by the breath of God in the human bosom, by producing, nourishing, and confirming every vice ; these, whether they live or die, must be consigned, by the decree of the Almighty, to glory and virtue. For this is not only consonant with the maturest determinations of reason, but founded on eternal truth and invariable equity. For to whom can the tuition and guardianship of equity be more sacred, than to the divine mind, from whose unchangeable ideas it results ?

SINCE therefore man alone, of all inferior conscious beings, is capacitated, by exploring his own and other natures, in some measure to discover the divine existence and perfections ; as his kindred to divinity must be nearer, so if he has not rendered himself obnoxious to divine wrath, by a life of guilt and pollution, he must surely return to God, from whence he came. Nor is there a stronger or more convincing argument for human immortality, than that man participates the divine intelligence,

gence, and, from these impressions of wisdom, goodness, and justice, which are legible in the moral and material world, can investigate the will of their glorious Architect and Superintendent, in such a manner, that though he were born in the most savage and inhospitable desert, yet, by the impulses and discipline of nature, he could not doubt that God exists, nor that he is the supreme object of worship and veneration.

WHAT a sublime discovery is this ! how must it fill the rational soul with astonishment ! and how might it cover inferior natures with blushes, if they were susceptible of those sensations, to find that man is connected by an intimate and indissoluble relation with God ! and that there is no percipient being upon earth, save man alone, endued with the knowledge of its Creator ; nor is there any other creature under heaven informed by a living, active, and intelligent spirit, an irradiation of the divine mind.

CAN man, therefore, be so impenetrably blind, so invincibly ignorant of his filial relation, that he should industriously avoid a transition which reconducts him to his father and his God ; for we can conclude death to be nothing else, but a migration to a sublime and heavenly

heavenly abode: nor is this only proved by such deductions as arise from our notions of truth and equity, but likewise by the firmest and most unanimous consent of the wise and good.

AND if there are any who live in such a manner, as to be in endless discord with their own internal constitution, such it would highly become to reflect, that this terrestrial orb itself, and every thing else beneath the canopy of heaven, is governed by the divine will; which as it has impressed established laws on the inanimate creation, as it actuates and regulates sensitive beings of an inferior rank by instinctive principles, must certainly have prescribed some rule of action to be assiduously acquired, and inviolably observed by its intelligent offspring.

BESIDES, that we may be reconciled with a fate composed of opposite extremes, let us consider, that certain vicissitudes appear to be exhibited through the whole frame of nature. For will any one assert, that he has beheld the earth fertile and productive every year, or seen her bosom always covered with the richest and most liberal crops, nor ever teeming with noxious or useless weeds? Who can affirm, from his own observations, that, in their season, animals are always pregnant, and always prolific of a
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numerous and healthy race, without the least interval of barrenness? But since these contradictory phenomena are universally perceived; and since, in human affairs, it is not permitted to wish for any thing perpetually exempt from fluctuation, and permanent in its nature; why should we expect that human nature will be free from these alternatives and diversities which prevail through the whole material and animal creation?

IF man has lived for a number of years in prosperity; if, after the acquisition of distinguished honours, accumulated wealth, and a promising family, he is long indulged with the enjoyment of these important advantages; surely such a one may acquit providence, and allow that it has dealt nobly with him. Still however some reverse of fortune, something from which a sensitive nature shrinks, must remain to be felt and endured. Death, however terrible, must be encountered; though it should be born with greater patience, as it is nothing preternatural, nor the peculiar destiny of any one individual, but common to the whole species: nay, instead of being only tolerable, we ought to esteem it highly acceptable, even on this account, that it rescues us from the numberless seductions and errors to

which we are liable, so long as we live in this world ; where the inconceivable diversity and inconsistency of prevailing opinions suspend our most indefatigable inquiries, and distract us in the pursuit of truth, to the perception and enjoyment of which this unwelcome messenger gently leads us.

Now, that no acquisition more blissful can accrue to the soul of man, I apprehend we may easily judge, from that boundless and insatiable desire of knowledge which is originally implanted in our frame, and which cannot be extinguished but by its dissolution ; nor can I perceive its perfection to consist in any thing else, than the full and perfect attainment and possession of truth. Now, what can we call the most strenuous efforts of our profoundest and most extensive knowledge, but nearer and more successful approaches to truth ? From whence it is plain, that, when the one is attained, the other can only be perfect : and it may with certainty be pronounced, that he who distinctly beholds, who intuitively perceives, the lovely form of truth, has attained the greatest good towards which his wishes aspired ; nay, that he is really and completely blessed.

BUT if we are impelled by the whole force of nature to pursue our greatest happiness, and
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fly from every oppressive weight of misery; what can we imagine more absurd and irrational, than a man who is so violently afflicted for the death of others, as to forget that felicity towards which he is natively impelled, and to pursue a life of consummate and unmixed despair? For such is the unalterable state of things, that unless one be absolutely enfranchised from the terrors of death; though he should not only have acquired the theory of virtue, but even in many cases reduced it to practice, and confirmed it by habit; though he should be sufficiently disinterested, to despise every selfish pursuit, in comparison of its possession; still it is impossible for him to be happy. For what is the consummation of misery, but torture intensely affecting, and perpetually residing in the soul? What else is terror, but a constant and painful impression, that we are threatened with such evils as are hateful and disagreeable to nature? But how can he be either easy or happy, who is incessantly haunted and depressed with these tormenting anticipations? Nay this must likewise be placed to the account of his unhappiness, that he has not only treasured up an internal fund of plagues and miseries in his own bosom, but likewise becomes the proverb, the reproach, and derision of others; because

no uneasiness appears more fordid and despicable, as nothing less becomes a man than its excess.

Now if these corporeal infirmities, whose infection reaches the soul, be justly punished with keen and bitter reproach, shall those vices which are produced and entertained by the mind itself be branded with no mark of infamy? It is, on the contrary, certain, that these ought to be chastised with severer and more vindictive animadversion, as the soul which they engross and occupy is a nobler habitation than the body.

BUT if any passion indulged in its extreme implies a high degree of turpitude, and justly subjects its victim to the keenest reproaches, surely it must follow, that he who abandons himself to excessive grief, can neither merit nor expect the least approbation. For as, in our opinions, there is a particular series or concatenation which is most agreeable to truth; so, in the course of things, there is a chain or succession of connected events, resulting from the established laws of nature and providence: and as, in the course of disputation, we are necessarily led from one conclusion to another, in the same manner, he who permits his internal œconomy to be stained or disarranged, he
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who suffers himself to be entangled in the intricacies of vice and exorbitant passion, shall immediately be hemmed in and overwhelmed by increasing miseries, shall be covered with numberless deformities and turpitudes.

YET though I have declared so violently against excessive grief, let me not be thought entirely to disapprove it in all its degrees, nor to wish it absolutely eradicated from the mind. There are undoubtedly certain boundaries, within which nature impells, and reason permits us to grieve; for, as it is wisely remarked by Crantor, when any part is separated from the body by violence or amputation, it is natural and proper that sensibility should remain, because thus we are not only rendered conscious of the disorder, but urged and stimulated to apply its remedy. For as no person can be insensible to corporeal pain, without being of a savage and stubborn nature; so the same insensibility transferred to the mind, indicates a stupid and inflexible disposition. But this is the culpable conduct, this the fault which I reprehend, when we so absolutely resign ourselves to uncontrollable sorrow, as to deserve a keener and more intolerable rebuke, for adopting an extreme diametrically opposite to that natural apathy which I formerly mentioned.

tioned. For as he who is impenetrably stupid, and deprived of all sensibility, appears a monstrous phenomenon, something quite different from human nature, which, when seized with a mortal distemper, shows, by its intrinsic motions, some degree of pain and uneasiness; so he who entertains immoderate grief, may be justly thought forgetful of his nature and its situation, as he seems to revolt against the necessary conditions of his being, the wise and good order established by nature and providence. From which it evidently appears, that men are highly criminal, when they dare to decline these revolutions of destiny that are common to their whole species, or when they do not sufficiently discover what becomes them in life, and distinguish what things are pursuable, from what are avoidable in their own nature, which is the proper office of wisdom.

Now that wisdom is deputed by the sanction and authority of Heaven, to be the ultimate arbitress of human affairs, from whose decisions there is no appeal, cannot surely be denied by any one. But he who gives way to the violence of unnatural grief, plainly opposes this sacred regent in her province, and is guilty of the most inextinguishable treason; for he not only resigns himself to melancholy and tears, without

out the least prospect of any salutary consequence, but entirely loses the use of all his designing faculties. Where then is reason, if it suffers itself to be extinguished in grief? Where is the perseverance and constancy of his virtue, if he is at variance with himself, and lies subdued by distress? Where, in short, is his participation of human nature, since he forgets that he is a man, and thinks himself above the reach of death?

It is however egregiously absurd for any one to flatter himself, that he is not subjected to the same destiny which all the rest of his kind sustain with resignation. For is it possible that any one should be ignorant, what a strict relation, what an accurate similarity subsists between man and man? Were not men participants of the same nature, were they not endued with qualifications in common, were they not endeared by common tenderness arising from that participation, what reason could be assigned for mutual beneficence? what should oblige one to assist another, either with his advice, his fortune, or his influence, or to defend him from the attacks and hostilities of his enemies? Yet we find, on the contrary, that they who discover an aversion to such kind interpositions, are not only disapproved by the

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common suffrage of their brethren, but even accused of selfishness and cruelty. For surely we are not like our statues, hewn into form from a rock of cold marble, or a mass of unfeeling oak. There are within us certain propensities to compassion and natural affection, which will never suffer to be extinguished a disposition that assimilates our nature to the Deity; I mean, the universal tenderness by which we exert ourselves for the assistance and happiness of others. Neither is it at all possible to doubt, that there is a principle deeply and indelibly impressed on the human heart, even in the formation of our existence; by which, as often as we perceive any person involved or oppressed with misfortunes, we are touched with sympathy even to the inmost recesses of our souls; nor can we, without self-disapprobation, omit any opportunity of alleviating his distress, if our interpositions may prove effectual, though before that instant he had been an entire stranger to us. For nature, by silent, yet powerful and intelligible importunities, seems to solicit from us the same exertions of benignity and tenderness towards the distressed, which, in similar circumstances, we would wish or expect from them.

IF then there be particular occurrences which every one has reason to presage as certain and unavoidable, why should he be disturbed and agitated in such a violent manner when they really happen? Why should he not rather recognise these events as the inevitable destiny of our nature, and equally impending on all the species? How much more beautiful is the sentiment of that dramatic character introduced by Terence, who acknowledges himself a man, and thinks himself concerned in every event relative to his nature?

WHEN therefore, with the same spirit and vigour as we would expell a beast of prey stung with thirst of blood, we have erased and obliterated this malignant prejudice out of our minds, that *wretchedness* and *humanity* are synonymous terms; when we have found the destiny of our nature is not wholly evil, but kindly tempered with blessings and satisfactions; we shall certainly pass our days in much less misery and solicitude. For this consolatory impression, this last resource will ever be left us, that whatever happens ought to be born with a firm and unshaken mind, and nothing can possibly befall a man which will render him totally and finally miserable. This tranquillity we may quickly possess, if we do

not meanly flatter our false and mischievous prepossessions, but embrace the truth with all our souls, which is the noblest, the most divine of all acquisitions. Under her sacred auspices we shall proceed with rapidity and success in the cultivation of our being ; we shall acquire that magnanimity and sublimity of spirit, which alone can render us equal to every adversity ; we shall enter the lists of virtue and honour, to perform the noblest and most arduous tasks which they demand with redoubled alacrity and vigour, when we esteem nothing truly laudable, but such dispositions and actions as are prompted by eternal rectitude and justice, nor solicit any other advantages, but that real and substantial excellence which alone can be productive of true glory.

BUT here I seem to confine myself within limits which are too narrow and contracted. For how can a more extensive campaign be opened? a campaign in which my thoughts may rove more at large, and derive more solid advantage from their excursions, than that which now lies before me. But I should blush, and appear unpardonable even to myself, if, neglecting that medicine for a wounded soul, which of all others appears to be most salutary and effectual, I should turn the whole force of
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my expostulation, the whole current of my thoughts, to my own pleasure and satisfaction alone.

I HAVE already said, that we ought strenuously to avoid intense and permanent sorrow; nor was my assertion without reason, since immoderate grief is frequently a copious and genuine source of numerous and severe afflictions, and attended with no beneficial effects that can balance them.

NOR is excessive grief an ambiguous or equivocal conduct, which we may be induced either to praise or blame, by numerous and important motives of equal force, derived from different opinions and opposite methods of reasoning. For if I should be threatened with a dilemma even of this kind, I would act with uncommon diffidence and precaution, nor suffer myself to be involved in a situation from whence I could perceive no egress. But since this is the case, that intense regret is really culpable, I assert, that we ought to subdue our passions, and resist grief with invincible spirit; for whether we explore our own minds, or consult the common sentiments of mankind, this is certainly our proper course. But if we transfer our thoughts to the dead themselves, how can we imagine that our inexhausted tears
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and endless lamentations will be acceptable to them, especially as they can derive no advantage from it? but to ourselves it will be fruitful of many disadvantages, and many severe reflexions from those who observe us. What therefore can we imagine they would wish or solicit from us? nothing certainly, but that we should consecrate them to memory with distinction and veneration.

LET none, says Ennius,

Let none who to the pile my relicts bear,
Bestow the idle tribute of a tear.

For what reason? He himself assigns it:

Embalm'd in fame my ashes still shall lie;
Nor shall my nobler self, my numbers, die,
But, breath'd from mouth to mouth, in endless series fly. } }

Why therefore should he refuse the tribute of lamentations and tears? Because he could only wish for that glory, which, whilst alive, he was conscious of having obtained. On the same account then we have reason to suspect, that our protracted and deep regret may prove uneasy and disagreeable to the dead, since we cannot imagine that they would importune any favours from us, unless they were such as afford ourselves the greatest pleasure and satisfaction. This must certainly be glory, or a constant and faithful

faithful recollection of their virtues, with all the love and admiration which they merit; which if we can immortalize, by transmitting them, in conversation or writing, from generation to generation, this seems to be the only obligation, nor is it a trivial one, which we can confer upon the dead.

WHAT shall we say to the maxim delivered by men of eminent wisdom, That he who grieves beyond the power of consolation or recovery, cannot adore the Deity himself with that fear and reverence which is due to supreme majesty? For it is the highest impiety, the most execrable sacrilege, to affront, with ungrateful returns, that free and disinterested goodness from whence, as from its native source, flows every advantage that we can enjoy. On the contrary, they who have implicitly obeyed the will of Heaven, and have received all the dispensations of its wise and free administration with equal complacency, are honoured with the highest praises of their cotemporaries whilst living, and consigned to immortality, with imperishable honour, when dead: This is the common sense of mankind from the earliest antiquity.

BUT if any characters were found who, to the worship of the Gods, joined the practice of
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virtue, and the exercise of universal benevolence, upon such these honours have always been conferred with proportionable zeal and alacrity.

WE have cause therefore in this, as in almost every other step of its procedure, to venerate the excellence of ancient wisdom. For what idea can we entertain as the aggregate of human perfection, what character under heaven can we dignify with more sincere or exalted praise, than him whose life has been one uninterrupted series of progressive virtue; who, to the worship and veneration of the Deity, has added the constant observation of universal philanthropy and justice; nor ever indulged the faintest wish, the most trivial thought, which had no tendency to improve his piety, humanity, or virtue?

IN vain would we attempt to assign any other cause for that ignorance and error which violate the tranquillity, and obscure the dignity of human nature, than the perpetual negligence, which almost universally prevails, of piety towards God, of beneficence and charity towards men, and of virtue and rectitude in our own dispositions and actions, though these ought to be the chief ends, the prepollent principles of human conduct. From the same unhappy causes, we most ardently pursue what we
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ought most strenuously to avoid, and are hurried along, with a blind precipitation, to such actions as deform the scene of human nature with savageness and ferocity. From this envenomed source natively spring those fierce and unquenchable desires, by which not only particular men, but even whole families and mighty states have been finally extirpated. Besides, from hence we may trace the blackest treachery, the most implacable discord, the fiercest and most uncontrollable seditions, the extermination of men, and devastation of realms. Hence likewise these insupportable calamities, these furious commotions, which must not only blast the order, but destroy the enjoyment, and extinguish the very desire of life in despair and bitterness.

QUITE different is the fate of those, whose hearts are proof to temptation, and whose souls are enamoured of virtue ; for, invariably obsequious to the divine will, they never hope that its procedure should comply with their humours and mistakes, but implicitly, and without reserve, abandon themselves, and their dearest interests, to its direction. Violence and injury are foreign to their nature ; their benevolence, their tenderness, their liberality are extensive as God's creation. No longer are they

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accessible to the attacks of exquisite pain, no longer domineered by the rage of blind and impetuous desire ; vice has rallied all her forces against them in vain, they have repelled her utmost efforts, they have expunged and eradicated the very seeds and principles of irregular passion out of their souls.

SURELY therefore our ancestors acted with the utmost propriety, when they dignified with divine honours those whose lives were agreeable to themselves, dear to God, and advantageous to man. Nor is the heavenly strain of the wise poet without foundation, which informs, that they pass an endless duration in happy and immediate intercourse with the immortal Gods.

YET this will not lead us so far as to imagine, what neither reason can conceive nor digest, that their bodies shall be translated to Heaven. For nature, which faithfully restores every detached particle to its proper and peculiar element, will not suffer us to believe, that what is earthly can be any where lodged but on earth. The same inconsistency, however, is not implied, in thinking that the souls of those who are distinguished in Heaven and earth, by their piety towards the one, and their beneficence in the other, should be elevated to those superior regions,

regions, as a sphere more adapted to their merit. Such, if we may believe the traditionary accounts continued even to our times, such was the glorious fate of Romulus, the original founder of our city, whom the distinguished benefit he conferred upon mankind, in erecting a state so majestic, justly advanced to the dignity of the Gods. And this happened in an enlightened period, when the human powers, cultivated with letters, experience, and discipline, could easily discern things from appearances, and truth from falsehood; so that their minds cannot be thought susceptible of any persuasion, which implied the least semblance of fiction or imposition. It is therefore conclusive, that this being, though once clothed in mortality, yet discovered such pre-eminence in virtue, and in every beneficent quality which adorns our nature, that he was not only judged worthy of immortality, but deified. Such grace and favour has also been bestowed on others, (if the annals of our fathers deserve our confidence), that their departure from life was immediately succeeded by their accession to divinity.

THIS opinion was first received among the Greeks, and perhaps from them adopted amongst us. For Hercules, Bacchus, the renowned brothers Castor and Pollux, with many

illustrious women, were mortals themselves, and descended from mortal progenitors, who are now supposed to be invested with no mean rank among the Gods. But because they excelled in virtue, and strenuously endeavoured to rouse the emulation of others, by exhibiting illustrious examples of unbiaſſed rectitude and diffuſive beneficence ; for this reason ſame, inſpired with gratitude by the recollection of their noble and meritorious actions, exalted them to Gods.

NOR will it be hard to prove, that theſe whom we call the *Dii majorum gentium*, or Gods of ſuperior dignity, as well as a great many others who are now numbered with the Deities, were once inhabitants of earth, and from thence tranſlated to heaven. The moſt convincing argument for this is, that we admit as ſacredly true the qualifications aſcribed to theſe great perſons, upon which their deification is founded ; that a principle, ſupported by the unanimous conſent of ſo many wiſe men in ſo many different ages, ſeems to have the ſanction of truth itſelf, if the uniform dictates of reaſon can be called *the voice of truth* ; and that it will not be eaſy to find in the univerſe another ſtation, where virtues ſo refined, extenſive, and pure, can be agreeably placed, and operate with propriety.

propriety. For if we reason at all, will we not discover the greatest infatuation by concluding, that those who have approached the Gods, and emulated their excellency by their innocence, their liberality, and every virtue which constitutes a great and good character, should be disjoined in place and rank from those to whom they are allied by nature and disposition? And as the soul of man, despising all sublunary enjoyments and possessions, aspires with innate propensity to heaven, is it agreeable to the wisdom or equity of the divine procedure, that these, who by the secret impulses of nature, as well as by their own endeavours and inclinations, have in reality cultivated the divine image in their bosoms, and formed themselves as much according to it as possible, should be deprived of that celestial inheritance which is most agreeable to their characters, and most adequate to their merit? Nay, to me they appear with so much greater justice to be numbered amongst the inhabitants of heaven, as their virtue and liberality shone with brighter and more distinguished radiance upon earth. For who could be more eminent for his intrepidity than Hercules? who could discover more consummate wisdom? who could show himself more effectually superior to every inordinate passion?

passion? What arduous atchievements did he not undertake and accomplish, that he might exert the native grandeur of his soul, and be advantageous to mankind? or what cup of pain and adversity did he not drain, even to its bitterest dregs? Can we therefore bear to think, that so noble a being should be excluded from heaven, on whose triumphant virtue eternal glory and renown bestow, with pleasure, their most distinguished garlands? Such likewise must be the situation of all the other heroes, who, though each of them excelled in a different province, were every one eminent for performing the part assigned them with approbation and success, whether in discharging those duties which we owe to Heaven or to mankind.

It cannot therefore be thought, that statues which, however durable, are obnoxious to the injuries of time, nor even the fading wreaths of a momentary triumph, are adequate returns for such sublime exertions of virtue: but honours of a more permanent and incorruptible nature were explored to invest those, who nobly preferred virtue, honour, and glory, to the undisturbed enjoyment of ease, to the highest gratifications of irregular passion, to the most exquisite sensible pleasure, and even to life itself.

IF then, with all our souls, we approve and admire the charms of pure and disinterested virtue; in the same degree must we admire and approve the just and equitable distribution of things, which allots different habitations for those who have cultivated and improved their being with every useful or amiable quality, and for those whose lives are branded with vice or enormity, suitable to the characters of each. For it was a fixed principle amongst the wisest of our predecessors, a number of whom had enriched their minds with traditions and observations collected from antiquity, that as the Gods are highly enamoured of justice, as they discover it to be a leading principle in their administration, it was incompatible with the divine character not to entertain and manifest the highest aversion to impiety and wickedness; from whence it is evident, that, by their own wise institutions, such persons as, during their whole lives, have abandoned themselves to impious and cruel indulgences, should be removed as far as possible from the pure and happy society above.

THIS not only consists with reason, to be cordially received and publicly declared as an article of faith, but will also be productive of the greatest and most extensive utility. For if,
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in the soul of man, there remains the faintest spark of piety, if he is in any degree sensible to the influence of religion, surely this must prove a powerful and insuperable restraint to check him in the perpetration of vice and wickedness, when he believes and reflects, that such as have stained their souls with impiety and pollution shall be eternally excluded from all communication and intercourse with the Gods. Nor did the same sages think heaven equally accessible to all: For they have taught us, that those who have inquinated their souls with crimes and atrocities, shall never emerge from their state of guilt and pollution, but sink deeper in darkness and turpitude to all eternity; whereas souls who have preserved their original purity, simplicity, and integrity, who are uninfected with the corruptions of the world, who have polished and refined their original powers with the most exquisite and noblest arts, shall, by a gentle and easy transition, return to the Gods, that is, to natures like their own.

IF these important doctrines are true, it is surely incumbent on us, by exerting all the powers of our souls, by exercising the most indefatigable diligence, to endeavour that we may not be excluded from heaven, but obtain a place among those happy beings, whose peculiar

culiar prerogative it is to possess and enjoy eternity. Which whoever would wish to accomplish, (and it is what all who value themselves, or who could live agreeably to nature, should wish to accomplish), let them never be so far induced by infatuation, as to adopt those very pursuits which lead others to ineffable and ultimate perdition. For it can never enter into our expectation, that our actions may elude the divine observation; because from an omnipresent Nature, whose consciousness is equally extensive with his existence, nothing can be latent, nothing concealed; nor will an infinitely pure intelligence approve such a conduct, as not only superior beings, but men who duly possess and exercise their faculties, must survey with horror and detestation. For what is more sordid and contemptible than sensative appetite inordinately gratified? what more base and infamous than avarice? what more hateful and execrable to God and man than cruelty? For these vices, though they are sometimes the curse and reproach of particular characters, are no less incompatible with our nature when uncorrupted, than it is agreeable to our constitution to pursue every legitimate advantage or gratification, to which we are however impelled by all the propensities of our being; and

within these bounds we must confine such violent desires as too frequently attract us towards those objects which are hostile to our virtue. This he may with much greater ease accomplish, who, whilst he traverses the path of life, retains perpetually in view the glorious end of his career; and so delightful, so exhilarating is this reflection, that, by reconciling us to the performance of our duty, and rendering us chearful in its discharge, we are inspired with an intense pleasure, a rational enthusiasm, which removes and annihilates all sense of fatigue.

THIS incessant and unwearied activity is easily discerned in such men as are distinguished for their excellence, or animated with the love of just and well-earned praise; who, in the most arduous enterprises of war, in the keenest litigations of property between individuals, in the warmest contentions that arise concerning the proper administration of the commonwealth, have habitually exerted such vigour of spirit, such dauntless intrepidity, that they were either entirely insensible or absolutely careless of all the toils they sustained, or the dangers with which they were threatened. For the prospect of future advantage or praise irresistably stimulates, and strongly invigorates the
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soul, when nobly struggling with its utmost efforts in the cause of virtue, or straining and panting in the pursuit of true glory.

NOR are these happy effects only perceived in arduous and painful undertakings, but even in such labours and designs as are of easier execution. For if you observe those who are candidates for fame in sports and exercises, when fired with the ardour of hunting, or emulation in the race; though spent and exhausted almost to utter extinction with the length and rapidity of their course, yet never will ye find their spirit abated, nor their enthusiasm cooled. Even in our own state, when animated with desires and expectations of public honour, what immense labours, what insuperable difficulties, what important solitudes have not our patriots sustained and conquered? yet how few, how very few can be found, who, forgetting the pleasure of the pursuit, will venture to acknowledge, that the labour attending public negotiations, or the toil and anxiety sustained by candidates for political offices, have debilitated their powers, or reduced them to a state of lassitude and inaction?

IN the same manner, they whose souls are prepossessed, whose eyes are captivated with the majestic charms, the sacred effulgence of

virtue, or they who feel the irresistible attractions of glory, either experience their vigour increasing with their toils; or if their task should demand such violent and continued exertions as entirely subdue them, and render intervals of relaxation necessary, yet they presently return to business, renovated in all their powers, and inspired with fresh alacrity; for the advantage of their country, the acquisition of a deathless and unspotted fame, actuate all their faculties, and engage all their attention.

BUT though any should think it beneath the dignity of virtue to pursue immortal fame as a motive of action, and place human happiness in the consciousness of rectitude alone; yet the same principle will not lead them to despise those divine honours which great and good men, after their decease, have been generally thought to participate: for such sentiments and dispositions would seem to reflect dishonour upon the Gods themselves, who demand the same testimony of regard and veneration from their inferiors.

So eminent however is the wisdom of those who have been actuated by these exalted motives and delightful expectations, that, whatever hopes they cherish, whatever actions they perform, must be the mature and certain result

sult of reason. Amongst these we may enumerate the Lacedemonians, a nation revered for the wisdom of their laws, the severity of their discipline, and the bravery of their conduct, whose invariable custom it was, to dignify such of their heroes as had lost their lives in the cause of their country with divine honours. What then shall we say of Athens, the genuine parent of all wisdom and learning? Did they not, by a vast majority of suffrages, inscribe their Codrus amongst the number of their Gods, as a reward of that filial reverence and affection which he discovered for his country, and all the other virtues in which he excelled?

NOR would I rashly assert, that these learned men were wrong in their sentiments, whose opinion it was, that the consecration of great and good men with divine honours might prove a more powerful incentive to virtue, and more violently stimulate those who are inspired with love and tenderness for their country, to encounter the most formidable threats, the sternest frowns of danger. For, except the consciousness of her own worth, glory is the only suitable and adequate reward of virtue. Nor is there any other spring of action, which can more effectually rouse the powers of a noble mind to laudable and worthy enterprises; a principle

principle which was wisely cultivated, and long retained by Greece, the faithful guardian, the tender and pious nurse of universal literature. She, on account of their virtues, enumerates many of her sons, who, from men, have been exalted to divinity. Among these there are some whose honours are still recent. Others she warmly contends have been raised to heaven many ages before, and assumed among the Deities. How great their number may be, those who revolve her ancient records may perhaps discover.

NOR have I expatiated so diffusely upon these deifications with a view to inspire the least suspicion, that I thought them rashly, inconsiderately, or too frequently conferred; since I myself venerate the persons on whom they were bestowed, and think them meritorious of the dignity which they enjoy. But rather, since we find so many amongst all nations who have obtained immortal and divine honours, it was my intention to inflame the spirit, and excite the emulation of the good and virtuous, that they may strenuously endeavour to deserve and acquire those testimonies of reverence, gratitude, and esteem, which the wisest of their species have judged to be most sublime and permanent. For no higher glory, no greater felicity

licity can adorn the human destiny, than elevation to that rank, towards which the founders of our city aspired, by confronting every danger, sustaining every fatigue, and encountering every conflict. And if private utility or advantage in any degree merit our regard, there is not a more certain method by which a man of wisdom and letters can pursue these ends. For when temples are dedicated and consecrated by public authority, what profound reverence do they obtain, and what tributes of praise accrue to their divinities from the people? since all who worship those to whom the temples are devoted, must necessarily acknowledge, that once they were men, but are now, by their virtue alone, elevated to the station, and invested with the power of Deity:

NOR is it surprising that those Deities should be publicly worshipped, or that their fanes and temples should be adorned with every signature of grandeur and sanctity, whose paternal or maternal race are found to be divine. For as the worship which we pay them is sacred and devote, as it results from those original impressions of piety and equity which are implanted in the soul, so it ought neither to strike us with astonishment nor hesitation. For nature herself instructs us, that, by a right derived
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from her own excellent constitution, those who are descended of Gods must participate the same pre-eminence of existence, the same sublime qualities, with their parents. But that one who is produced by a mortal father, or born of a human mother, should become a God, appears inconceivably astonishing, and proves a source of doubt and inquiry among many who contemplate the subject. Not that any one can question, much less deny, the justice of a procedure so sacredly equitable, as to reward the virtue of such heroes, patriots, and legislators, with select and uncommon honours; but that the force, the energy of virtue should be so great, as, by her own operations only, to change the very nature of those in whom she inheres. This is a subject of dispute even among those who have drunk deeply from the springs of erudition. To whom it may be replied, That the essence, the personal identity of such, are not changed by virtue; for this could not happen without the dissolution of that which they formerly possessed: but the soul retaining the same nature, the same essential principles, ascends to the Gods, and shares their prerogatives, as it is by its own indivisible structure immortal, and a participant of the divine eternity; whereas the body, by its
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primary construction, being mortal and discernible, must remain upon earth; nor can any thing terrestrial divest itself of its own constituent properties to assume others.

Now, though this inquiry appears involved in inextricable difficulties, and cannot admit of an easy solution; yet unless names and authorities be confronted with reason and argument, the explication already offered seems, in my opinion, not irreconcilable to common sense. And because, upon this topic, we have hinted, or at least inclined to hint, every thing which is important, and worth observation, it appears indispensibly requisite that we should mention what are the specific virtues, and what their number, which, by being exerted in human nature, have advanced their votaries to the dignity of GODHEAD.

As this institution was deduced from, so it is limited by public utility, that, with whatever marks of dignity men behold particular virtues impressed, they might hope to reach the same degree of elevation, if they excelled in the same accomplishments which procured it.

IN this conduct, the force and efficacy of example is wonderful; for many, with cheerfulness, imitate such qualifications in others, as

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have raised their possessors to those advantages which they ardently desire. And, from this early and useful principle of imitation, it frequently happens, that many exert indefatigable industry in such acquisitions and pursuits as never before entered into their imagination, till they were inspired and preceded by illustrious examples; which, when it is more widely diffused, what rapid advances it makes, and what prodigious force it acquires, one may so easily observe, that it is unnecessary for me to recapitulate them.

IT is agreed by all the observers of human life, that the greatest states, the most splendid arts, and almost every thing else which attracts the wonder and attention of mankind, deduce their origin from obscure and inconsiderable embryos. These insensibly, by the progress of time, the assistance of contingencies, and the force of imitation, have arisen to such a height, that they are no longer capable of accumulation or increase. But if this progressive tendency of things to maturity and perfection gives us any pleasure at all, I do not see how we can be more delighted with observing its gradations, than in transplanting and cultivating the virtues in our own bosoms, since upon these necessarily depend the formation of
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our character, and the regulation of our lives ; which, when they proceed upon right principles, and are properly cultivated, will produce the most copious and delightful fruits of justice, integrity, and incorrupted praise.

BUT though we regard the virtues with sacred veneration, both because they are venerable in their own nature, and because they so immensely contribute to the existence and happiness of the human race ; yet I should be extremely glad to understand, for what reason almost every bird, fish, or reptile, should be consecrated and worshipped by the Egyptians. We may excuse the Syrians for their blind adoration of a fish, and for numbering it amongst their Deities, as they are men neither endued with that penetration of genius, nor armed with those sovereign antidotes against superstition which philosophy yields : But how the Egyptians, a nation admired and extolled for the extent and profundity of their knowledge and learning, should degenerate into notions so absurd and extravagant, I own myself at a loss to know. For tell me, in the name of common sense, shall we esteem oxen, dogs, wolves, cats, and fishes amongst our Deities ? and shall the intellectual character of our na-

ture be so totally effaced, so dreadfully annihilated, that we must ascribe the glory, the power, the munificence, the perfection of Godhead, to those living and sensitive beings, which are formed and propagated for our convenience and assistance as their ultimate end? creatures which Nature, attentive to her own works, must pronounce the most groveling, obscene, and turpid phenomena that she exhibits. Nay, shall we ascribe divinity to those vindictive animals, which depopulate the human race, and riot in carnage and desolation? such as crocodiles, asps, serpents, and all the fierce and sanguinary monsters of the deserts. How else can we more effectually invert the established order of Nature, than by mistaking her best and noblest, for her meanest and unworthiest productions, and by placing that regard on the last which is due to the first alone? Nay, when we have displayed such proofs of shameful ignorance and barbarity, is it not enough? Must we likewise defend with pertinacity that absurd infatuation, which the very brutes whom we worship would blush to avow?

WITH the same inexplicable folly, Egypt enumerates amongst its Gods, onions, garlic, and

and other productions of the earth. Such insensate opinions and practices one can scarce treat with decency, much less attempt a formal refutation of them: for so incredible is their absurdity, that there is no prejudice so obstinate, no ignorance so invincible, as not to reject and despise them.

IF storms and tempests are deified in our country, this has been admitted, and ratified by hoary tradition, in the ancient rites and ceremonies of the Roman people; which can neither be altered nor disturbed without the most impious sacrilege, because they are not only supported by arguments which are far from being contemptible, but their use and propriety is established in practice and experience.

GREECE however, which was formerly the object of our just praise, cannot be commended, in this place, for its unaccountable temerity and profaneness in deifying concupiscence and venereal desires, which may be discovered by the paintings and sculptures so conspicuous in their temples and academies. For what have amorous achievements and inclinations to do in schools of discipline? or how could such deifications contribute to the general utility or virtue of the state, whether by becoming the objects of contempla-
tion

tion or imitation? When we either consecrate heroes, or their virtues, with divine honours, our selection ought to be made with the most religious care, the most reverend discrimination; nothing precipitant, nothing inconsiderate should be permitted; nothing which can even inspire the slightest suspicion of vice or folly must enter into the character of any being or quality which we call *divine*. These important rules, these sacred decorums, seem nevertheless to be violated by those, who have dignified with divine power and authority, qualities directly contrary to probity and chastity.

SUCH therefore as have assisted, improved, or embellished human life in any considerable degree; such as have distinguished themselves in the exercise of virtue, or in the accomplishment of glorious and arduous enterprises; such are, without doubt, entitled to that honour and worship which we pay to the Gods, by all the claims of justice, in the universal sense of mankind. Nor would I, on any conditions, be the first to abrogate a custom so laudable; as such a precedent might be esteemed, perhaps not without reason, impious and profane. For it is not my general maxim, so violently to adopt those pursuits which are attended with renown
and

and eclat, as to fly from those which might impress my virtue or my reputation with the smallest stain. But as we see a number of characters both male and female inserted amongst the Gods, and as we venerate their most sacred temples erected both in the city and in the country, we publicly testify our approbation of the wisdom discovered in those, by whose superior powers, and salutary inventions, human life is now so happily cultivated and improved. For under the conduct and auspices of such excellent patterns, we cannot err; nor must we explore the reason of a conduct so just and proper in ourselves, but in those whose merits we revere, and whose examples we follow. It is the original and incorrupted voice of equity herself, that gives sanction to those who, far from depriving any man or woman distinguished for their merit of that honour which is due to them, have preserved their memory as sacred and venerable; nor would it be just in us, if we are conscious of any who have deserved the same regard and reverence, if we should suffer them to be absorbed in silence and oblivion.

“ Nor would I be thought to assert this on
 “ thy account, my dearest Tullia, alone, whose
 “ virtue

“ virtue, wisdom, modesty, and learning, shall
 “ be inscribed in living and indelible charac-
 “ ters on the vast expanse of eternity, and
 “ brighten to its latest ages ; but on account
 “ of every other candidate for human appro-
 “ bation, whom I myself have observed, or
 “ who shall attract the attention of posterity in
 “ any future period. For again my soul, again
 “ my observations turn upon thee. Thou, my
 “ sweetest, loveliest treasure, thou art not whol-
 “ ly lost to my paternal tenderness, nor final-
 “ ly ravished from my fond embraces ; since,
 “ as days, hours, moments increase, thou art
 “ for ever more sensibly, more delightfully pre-
 “ sent to my heart, in the rising beauties of thy
 “ spotless fame, and in the heavenly splendour
 “ of thy virtue. Thou shalt live in the tender-
 “ ness and regret of ages, whilst virtue herself
 “ is memorable, and whilst any of those signa-
 “ tures remain uneffaced by which she is con-
 “ secrated to fame. And that these shall be
 “ eternal, we may firmly trust, because they
 “ are in their own nature the best and most
 “ durable vehicles for conveying to remotest
 “ futurity a deposit so sacred. I shall there-
 “ fore never enjoy that conscious approbation
 “ which arises from paying, in their full ex-
 “ tent,

“ tent, the last duties to departed worth ; un-
 “ less that filial reverence and affection so
 “ warmly, so faithfully, so effectually exerted
 “ in care and sympathy for me ; unless that ex-
 “ emplary virtue, which was one of the great-
 “ est ornaments of thy country, be duly ho-
 “ noured. And this end I shall easily obtain,
 “ since the place which the reason of things,
 “ and the sense of mankind have taught me
 “ to select for thy reception, can never
 “ strike our senses, nor enter into our ima-
 “ gination, without inspiring the most sub-
 “ lime, religious, and devote sentiments. If
 “ then I can derive any consolation from
 “ this source, and certainly much may be
 “ derived from it, or if any praise from
 “ having fulfilled the duties of a parent, these
 “ pleasing retrospects will for ever affect my
 “ heart with intense delight. For surely no
 “ sounds can be more harmonious to my ear,
 “ no recollections more transporting to my
 “ soul, than those which inform me, that,
 “ with tenderness, piety, and gratitude, I
 “ loved one whose intrinsic merit demanded
 “ these affections and sentiments in their
 “ highest purity, and in their utmost
 “ warmth ; particularly, as both our ances-

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“ tors,

“tors, and those of other countries, have
“been so profuse and liberal in accumula-
“ting honours upon those who deserved
“such important and solemn acknowledg-
“ments. But if there could be any reason
“for deifying even animals themselves,
“which the Egyptians have frequently
“done, though no such reason could ever
“be assigned; if the descendants of Cadmus,
“Amphitryon, or Tyndarus, have been el-
“ated to the possession and administration of
“heaven by the voice of fame; surely my
“dearest Tullia may claim and obtain the
“same honour. This, with paternal zeal, let
“me attempt; let me, with the approbation
“of the immortal Gods themselves, worship
“thee, already raised by native merit to
“their dignity, and mixing in their assem-
“blies; since the profound reverence and
“devotion with which I adore thee, cannot
“fail to obtain the sanction of universal as-
“sent and acclamation. And thou, no more
“my child, but a celestial being, shalt hear
“thy praises, and see thy worship, in that
“temple which is now solemnly dedicated
“and consecrated to thy name. Nay, even
“amidst the joys of heaven, it shall delight
“thy

“ thy soul to perceive, that I have not only
 “ paid those sacred honours which I owe
 “ thee, but eluded the most dreadful blow of
 “ adverse fortune, the cruelest shaft which her
 “ malice could tinge to pierce the heart of
 “ an afflicted father. For well thou know-
 “ est, with what firm self-possession, what
 “ unshaken vigour of mind, I formerly re-
 “ sisted every disagreeable contingency ; so
 “ that when fortune had expelled me from
 “ my country, and stripped me of all my dig-
 “ nities, she could not, even by an attack so
 “ fierce and formidable, subdue or break
 “ my spirit. What severe and bitter con-
 “ flicts I maintained with my enemies, what
 “ vigour and resolution I exerted in con-
 “ fronting their calumnies and disconcert-
 “ ing their counsels, all who have observed
 “ with attention the various revolutions of
 “ our state may sufficiently know. But in
 “ that sad, that tremendous moment, when
 “ fortune, my dearest Tullia, as the last ef-
 “ fort of her rage, tore thee from my fond,
 “ my paternal arms, then indeed I felt, in e-
 “ very conscious and sensitive power, how
 “ extensive is her influence in human affairs,
 “ and with what immense force, what mor-

“ tal weapons she armed herself against me.
 “ What therefore remained for wretched me,
 “ but to become a willing trophy, and yield
 “ her the full enjoyment of her victory,
 “ when, smarting with my recent, my soul-
 “ piercing wound, I was immersed in grief,
 “ and all my powers subdued by insupport-
 “ able distress? But now having armed and
 “ fortified my bosom against the utmost vio-
 “ lence of fortune by the dictates of philoso-
 “ phy, now that I consider thee as an im-
 “ mortal being; yet touched with soft com-
 “ passion for a weeping father, and beaming
 “ from thy throne in heaven the celestial ra-
 “ diance of thy smiles on my dejected mind,
 “ the largest capacities of my expanded soul
 “ can admit no more joy and satisfaction
 “ than at present I feel. All my being seems
 “ to exult in transports unfelt before; it rises
 “ superior to every threat or frown of for-
 “ tune, and celebrates its triumph over eve-
 “ ry adverse accident of life. But since thou
 “ hast already, in a manner so signal and effi-
 “ cacious, sustained, enlightened, and ani-
 “ mated me by the force and lustre of thy
 “ wisdom and virtue, though now thou art
 “ raised above the interests and concerns of
 “ mortality,

“ mortality, yet do not, Oh! do not finally
“ forsake me! but sometimes bend thy gra-
“ cious eyes from heaven on a father, who
“ still recollects thee with all his original
“ fondness. Be henceforth my genius, and
“ lead me to that divine abode, where I shall
“ for ever enjoy thy dear presence, and pass
“ an eternity in that sweet intercourse which
“ formerly gave me such delight. Thus
“ shalt thou make ample returns to my pa-
“ ternal tenderness, a task which thou wilt
“ surely perform with gratitude and joy;
“ thus likewise shall I anticipate the happy
“ moment of our reunion with more intense
“ delight, than the grief and bitterness which
“ I felt at our cruel separation.”

SERVIUS

SERVIVS SVPICIVS TO M. T. CICEKO,
after the Death of his Daughter.

S. SVPICIVS salutes M. T. CICEKO.

WHEN I heard the affecting news of your daughter Tullia's death, I felt all the sentiments of tenderness and regret which I owed to friendship and humanity, and was equally touched as if I had participated with you the office and affections of a father. Had I been present with you, I should not have been wanting in sympathy; nor would this secondary manifestation of my grief have been necessary, since you must have perceived it more sensibly from your immediate observation of my whole demeanour. And though nothing can be more severe, nothing more oppressive to a sensible heart, than the task of administering consolation in such distressing circumstances; because those by whom it should be administered, being strongly connected with the afflicted person,
either

either by consanguinity or affection, must not only feel the loss which he laments as a misfortune to themselves, but even superadd his sorrows to their own: nor can they, without floods of tears, suspend the whole propensity of nature, by an exertion so violent; insomuch that they rather seem to want comfort from others, than to be in a situation for soothing a grief which they so intimately partake: yet I have determined, in as few words as possible, to write you such thoughts as the present deplorable accident suggests; not because I think you incapable of exploring the same alleviations from the exercise of your own mind; but because, tormented and oppressed with recent anguish, its native activity and discernment may be too much clouded and restrained to call in such resources, or to feel them in a proper manner.

WHY should your grief, though domestic, and peculiarly affecting, create such violent emotions in your soul? Recollect how Fortune has used us, and how malignant her procedure still continues to be. Alas! my friend, we have lost every thing which is endeared to men, by ties equally strong,

strong, if not more sacred than those of nature; we are deprived of our country; we have seen a sense of public virtue extinguished; we are degraded from that dignity which was our native right; we have seen the commonwealth overturned, and all those individual honours, which were the result of its former structure, debased even to the dust. When we contemplate this single misfortune, what accession can our anguish possibly receive? or what mind can be inured to such painful recollections, without becoming insensible to every other disaster, and esteeming every other misfortune insignificant and trivial? Can I imagine that you lament her fate? How frequently and strongly must the present posture of affairs impress this thought on your mind, as well as on mine, that, in these tumultuous and disagreeable times, such persons ought rather to be congratulated than bewailed, to whom Fate allows the happy alternative, of eluding those internal pains which torment their survivors, by exchanging death for life? At such a period as this, what mighty attractions could life boast to detain her? Of what advantages could she be secure? what hope

hope could she indulge? what consolation could she enjoy? Was it that she might pass her life in conjugal endearments with some selected youth of the first rank? As if it were likely, in these degenerate times, that you should find such a distinguished youth for a son-in-law, to whose fidelity and tenderness you may think yourself safe in resigning your daughter. Or perhaps you may suppose that she might produce a numerous and blooming race, in whose advances to maturity, and prospect of happiness, she would rejoice. But who, in these capricious revolutions of public affairs, can promise to retain the hereditary advantages which they derive from their parents? Who will stand a candidate for posts of honour in the republic, according to their regular gradations? Who can exert his liberality in transacting the affairs of his friends? What privilege of this kind have we possessed, of which our descendents will not be deprived, before maturity of age shall qualify them to use it?

BUT perhaps it may be thought a misfortune prematurely to lose our children; and a misfortune it is indeed, when it does not intercept the severer and more disagreeable

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lot of enduring and suffering, in their full extent, those miseries and calamities which are the plagues of our times. I would willingly recapitulate the same circumstances to you which have consoled my own distress, if they could produce the same happy effect in your heart.

IN my return from Asia, whilst from Ægina we sailed towards Megara, I was intent on surveying the circumjacent regions. Behind me was Ægina, before Megara; on the right hand Piræus, on the left Corinth. These cities were formerly opulent and flourishing: now, sunk in melancholy ruins, they lay in prospect. Thus then I began to meditate with myself: "Strange! that we
 " short-lived individuals of the human
 " species should be so much moved when
 " any one of us leaves the present scene,
 " though, comparatively speaking, we are
 " but the creatures of a day, whilst, in the
 " horizon which at present bounds my view,
 " the sad relics of so many mighty cities
 " lie scattered. If therefore thou, O Servius, art conscious of being born to the
 " lot of humanity, why shouldst thou not restrain thy wishes and pursuits within the
 " boundaries

“boundaries to which Fate confines them.” Believe me, this contemplation did not a little contribute to fortify my mind. If you think it may probably have the same influence with you, place yourself in idea as much in the same scene, and let the same objects be as effectually present to your imagination as possible. At a juncture when so many great and good men have perished, marking the same period with calamity and ruin, when the lustre of our state is extinguished, when all the provinces are in tumult and conflagration, why should your soul be agitated with such violent emotions for the loss of one daughter, who is at best but a mortal and a woman; who, if she already had not breathed her last, must, in the course of a few years, have sustained that revolution, because subjected by her nature and her birth to the inevitable laws of mortality?

BUT perhaps it may be proper to call your thoughts from such melancholy views, and rather consider what is worthy and becoming in the character which you bear, and in the part which Heaven has assigned you. Think that your daughter has lived

as long as life could be necessary or agreeable to her; that she lived whilst the state flourished in its integrity; that, with filial exultation, she beheld her father a pretor, a consul, an augur; that she was nobly allied by marriage; that she had performed almost all the duties, and shared almost all the enjoyments which occur in human life; and that she expired with an expiring commonwealth. With what justice then can you or she remonstrate against fortune in these circumstances? In short, forget not that you are Cicero; forget not that you are the sage whose wisdom illumed, and whose counsels frequently directed others; nor imitate those wretched empirics, who, ostentatious of their skill in medicine, apply remedies to the diseases of others at random, but show their ignorance by their incapacity of curing themselves: but rather employ such prescriptions as you have successfully administered to others, for the restoration of your own mind, and the recovery of its original tranquillity. There is no sorrow, however violent, which may not be soothed and diminished by length of time; but it would be dishonourable in you to wait for this period,

riod, without anticipating its effects by the salutary interposition of philosophy. Nay, if the dead have any remaining consciousness, so intense, so delicate was your daughter's regard for you, so conspicuous her piety towards all those with whom she was connected by nature or friendship, that certainly your protracted regret must be what she would by no means wish. Offer then this grateful sacrifice of your returning cheerfulness to the soul of your departed child; allow this valuable concession to your other friends and acquaintances, who feel, from sympathy, all the anguish of a deploring father; grant it likewise to your unhappy country, that, if yet there is any resource, she may be directed by your wisdom, or assisted by your hand. In fine, since we have now sunk to such a depth of wretchedness, that we must groan beneath the weight of public slavery, be not so weak, so unmanly, as to inspire observing eyes with dangerous suspicions against you, and give them reason to think, that your tears rather flow for the subjection of the state, and the conquests of her invaders, than for the fate of your daughter.

I AM ashamed to expatiate more at large with you upon these topics, lest you should think me less confident in your prudence than it deserves. For this reason, when I have mentioned only one thing more, I shall conclude my letter.

WE have frequently seen you, in prosperity and success, behaving with the utmost decorum, and, for a conduct so singularly just and amiable, obtaining a high degree of public approbation. Let us therefore behold you support an opposite character with equal grace and felicity; let us have the pleasure of contemplating the same magnanimity exerted under the pressure of adverse fortune, and perceiving, by proof, that no calamity can depress your spirit more than it ought, lest a character, which has already exhibited all the other virtues, should appear defective in this alone.

As to myself, and the situation of my private affairs; when I hear that you have regained your former serenity, I shall inform you how things are disposed here, and what is the state of the province. Adieu.

ANSWER to the foregoing.

M. T. CICERO to SERVIUS SULPICIUS
wishes happiness.

HOW agreeable would it have been to me, my dear Servius, if, as you mention in your letter, you had indeed been with me, in this severe probation of my internal force? What effects your presence must have had upon my heart, both by the consolation that you would have offered, and the sympathy that you would have discovered, almost equal to the cause by which it was exerted, I can easily perceive from this single circumstance, that, even whilst I read your letter, it lessened, in some degree, the sense, the bitterness of my misfortune; because, in writing, you have not only been extremely happy in chusing those subjects which are most effectually calculated to diminish my grief; but, in your efforts to impress these consolations on my heart, you
plainly

plainly show, how deeply, how largely you have imbibed my distress. Yet your son Servius, by all the kind duties, the tender offices which, in such a mournful crisis, could be exerted, gave the strongest evidence how dearly he loved me, and how acceptable to you he thought such testimonies of his affection towards me would prove. His friendship indeed, on other occasions, when interposing for my happiness or advantage, has often given me greater pleasure, but could never affect me with livelier gratitude than at present. It is not however your words alone, nor your presence and participation of my regret, which alleviates my anguish, but even the importance and dignity of the person by whom this friendly task is undertaken. For to me it appears shameful and unworthy, to bear my misfortune with less magnanimity, than one endued with your profound and comprehensive wisdom thinks I ought in propriety to exert. Yet in some intervals I am totally depressed, and almost incapable of resisting the violence of my emotions, when I reflect, that I am denied those resources of comfort, which others, whose examples I proposed to my own conduct,

conduct, in the same unhappy circumstances, enjoyed. For Q. Maximus, who was deprived of his son, after the youth had arrived at the consular dignity, after he had, by important achievements, exhibited distinguished worth; and L. Paulus, who in seven days lost two; and your Gallus, and M. Cato, the latter of whom was robbed of a son endued with the brightest genius, and the noblest virtues; lived in that happy age, when the dignities which they acquired in a flourishing commonwealth alleviated their calamities. But to me, from whom those honours which you enumerate, and which I had acquired by the most arduous and difficult efforts, are extorted; to me that consolation, which is now unhappily snatched away, was the sole resource. No longer were my thoughts engaged in transacting the business of my friends, nor in the administration of the state; I could no longer with satisfaction plead in the Forum; it gave me intolerable pain to behold the senate-house; for I thought myself, as I really was, unjustly divested of all the advantages accruing from my fortune, and of all the happy fruits which might naturally be expected from my

B b industry.

industry. But whilst I reflected that my situation was not peculiarly miserable, and that the same public or private disappointments, which affected me, were likewise participated by you and some others; whilst I tried to subdue my own reluctant spirit, and to bear my bad fortune with that resignation which it required, still one dear, one last retreat was left me; still there was one enjoyment in which my heart, excruciated with public cares and private disappointments, could acquiesce; still I had another self, softened by the charms, the graces, the delicacies of her sex, whose conversation at once delighted and supported me, and in whose sympathetic bosom I could freely effuse all my distress, and all my anxieties. But now by this severe, this recent affliction, the former wounds of my soul, whose torture seemed a little mitigated, bleed and smart with renewed and aggravated anguish. For as then I found a refuge in paternal tenderness at home, from that exquisite regret which the ruin of my country inspired, alas! it is now no longer in my power to divert my attention from my desolated house, that my thoughts may find repose in the public happiness

pinefs and prosperity. Impelled therefore by my miferies on all hands, I fly with equal fpeed from family-endearments and public negotiations ; becaufe neither can the fweets of domeftic life any longer footh the chagrin and difappointment which refult from my attention to the ftate of my falling country, nor can the prosperity of my country leffen the bitternefs of my domeftic diftreffs. For which reafon I expect you with greater impatience, and wifh to fee you as foon as poffible : for no lenitive at prefent can be more effectual to me, than that reciprocation of kind offices, that amicable intercourfe of fentiments and converfation, which fubfift between us. As I expected your arrival, fo it gave me pleafure to hear you were approaching ; and I wifhed more anxiously for an interview fo feafonable, that we might concert between ourfelves how it would be proper to frame our deportment in this delicate conjuncture. There feems to be no alternative but implicit fubmiffion to the will of one perfon, whole private character we muft acknowledge to be both wife and liberal ; not hostile to me, and, if I can depend on my own judgment, very friendly

to you. Yet though this should be the case, we may still find it necessary to join our closest and most accurate deliberations, not upon what plan we shall act, but how we may enjoy, in a manner convenient for ourselves, and becoming our dignity, that repose which his free and generous concession may yield us. Adieu.

REVEALED RELIGION

PROPER CONSOLATION

O F

H U M A N L I F E.

By THOMAS BLACKLOCK, D. D.

*Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also
in me. JOHN xiv. 1.*

THE
HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON
IN THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

By
JOHN STOW
AND
JAMES WATTS
ESQ.
IN TWO VOLUMES.
LONDON:
Printed by J. Sturges, in Pall-mall.
1794.

To the REVEREND

Mr JOSEPH SPENCE.

Late PROFESSOR of POETRY in the
University of OXFORD.

REVEREND SIR,

HOW agreeable to me is this public opportunity of expressing the sentiments of a heart overflowing with gratitude for the many favours it has received from you. It is to your kind patronage that I owe my introduction into the republic of letters, and to your benevolence, in some measure, my present comfortable situation. But as this subject can no way interest the generality of readers, and would, I believe, hurt your delicacy, if I give scope to my pen; I will therefore leave unsaid the greatest part of what the warmth of my sensibility suggests
upon

DEDICATION.

upon this occasion. Allow me only to add, that an Essay on the Evidence and Consolation of Christianity could not, with greater propriety, be dedicated to any one than the Reverend Mr SPENCE, who is so distinguished for all the virtues that adorn the Christian character. What is here presented to you, was written with no intention of publication, but merely to amuse myself at the time; but the advice of some friends, since my coming to Edinburgh, induced me to let it take its fate in the world with its Author: In this, however, my views were by no means lucrative. I am,

REVEREND SIR,

EDINBURGH, }
Oct. 9. 1767. }

With the profoundest respect,

and warmest gratitude,

your most obedient,

humble servant,

THOMAS BLACKLOCK.

REVEALED RELIGION

PROPER CONSOLATION

O F

HUMAN LIFE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE number and diversity of evils to which man is obnoxious in his present state, have long been the subject of constant experience and profound speculation. Philosophy has exhausted her whole strength in summing up all the ingredients which compose the bitter draught of life. The nature of each has been minutely examined, their quantity and duration accurately ascertained. Much pains have been taken to distinguish real from imaginary evils. In

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our calmer moments we can survey, with some degree of serenity, the theory of human distress, and flatter ourselves that the medicines prescribed in every calamity may be extremely efficacious for our relief. But, alas ! when misery approaches, or even threatens to approach, we feel, to the depth of our souls, that pain, vexation, and grief, are real in themselves, whatever causes produce them; that whether sweetened or gilded, whether analyzed or compounded, still the potion is no less bitter and intolerable than before. And whilst the constitution and situation of human nature remain what they are, whilst we continue capable of painful sensations, and surrounded with objects which sensibly irritate all our feeling powers, the united efforts of unassisted reason will never be sufficient to preserve our hearts from trouble. Something indeed may depend on salutary precepts, and more still on our habits of life; yet these, at best, can only lessen the degree, not change the nature of misfortune.

WHY am I told that immunity from corporeal uneasiness is not a desirable state? "Because,"

“ cause,” says the philosopher, “ it is not in your power.” And does this render it less desirable? No, surely; but more so. Instead of being easy in the flame because I cannot escape it, the very confinement aggravates the smart.

ACCORDING to others, we must pursue pleasure as the sovereign remedy. And what is pleasure? Is it of the mind or body? If of the body, then the mutability of its affairs, and the frailty of its nature, will prove the incessant and incurable bane of happiness; if of the mind, it must either arise from speculation or benevolence. But how laborious our search of truth, and how unsatisfactory our reward, has been the common topic of learned men, from the beginning of the world. Nor have the votaries of kind affection proved entirely successful. The woes and crimes of men, their own limited powers, and their ineffectual schemes for public happiness, render life sufficiently laborious and painful. They sit down indeed contented; but their resignation is the effect of despair, rather than success.

SUCH then were the prospects, and such the enterprizes of men in their pursuit of happiness, till the infinite goodness of their Creator interposed for their relief. At first, as their understanding was weak, he darted the beams of his returning grace and truth more faintly on the soul. By degrees the splendour brightened, till at last it appeared in meridian glory, by the incarnation of JESUS CHRIST. He it was who, about the time of his departure from this world, exhorted his apostles not to suffer their hearts to be troubled; for since they believed in the being of God, and all the truths deducible from that persuasion, they might also believe in him, and in all the consolatory doctrines which he taught. It is as if he had said, “ Let not my approaching sufferings and death depress your minds with insupportable grief; if you believe in God, it is natural to believe also that he will interpose for suffering goodness, to alleviate its distress, and direct its conduct. Believe therefore that I am the person sent from heaven, to negotiate a full and certain reconciliation between God and man. Believe the dignity of my character, the
 “ wisdom

REVEALED RELIGION. 183

“ wisdom of my precepts, the truth of my
“ doctrines, the reality of my miracles, the
“ veracity of my promises, and the inten-
“ tion of my arrival. These truths, if constant-
“ ly reviewed, and deeply impressed in your
“ souls, will preserve your hearts from be-
“ ing troubled.”

FIRST, then, we shall show, That the belief of God's existence and government is attended with as great difficulties as those of the Christian revelation.

SECONDLY, That the evidences which support Christianity are no less strong, and still more obvious.

THIRDLY, We shall compare the difficulties that occur in natural and revealed religion.

FOURTHLY, Prove that the consolations derived from the former are more clearly discovered by the latter, with others which reason could never investigate. And,

FIFTHLY,

FIFTHLY, Deduce a few plain and natural inferences from the whole.

SECTION I.

SINCE then something at present exists, it is certain that something must always have existed. For no eternal chain of causes and effects can support themselves, but must necessarily depend on some primary cause, which owes its being and energy to nothing else, but possesses the reason of its own existence within itself from all eternity. There is no other rational account which we can give, why things began to be. And yet may we not appeal to the mind, whether it is not almost as difficult to conceive a thing begun without a cause, as an eternal and underived being?

AGAIN, from the divisible and mutable nature of all material objects, it is plain that both their form and substance must depend on some immutable and imperishable cause; and yet we shall by no means find it easy to determine, whether the difficulty of sup-
posing

posing these elements existent from eternity, is less than to suppose them created from nothing, or the product of a nature purely spiritual.

FURTHER, we cannot doubt but that motion is extrinsic to matter; and yet how that should be impressed by a pure and uncompounded mind, which has neither solidity, extension, nor resistance, must for ever remain a secret to us. That the motions of our bodies coincide with our own volitions, we know; but between the determination and the motion, we are sensible of no intermediate exertion by which that change is produced.

ONCE more, from the number and extent of God's works, his universal presence must be granted; and yet how omnipresence can be the attribute of any being which is not extended, how extension can subsist without divisibility, or how any substance can be divisible without being also mortal, we cannot easily comprehend.

FROM

FROM the changes which happen in nature, we seem to acquire a sensible demonstration, that these are effected by some power ; yet that energy operates so remotely from our investigation, that in vain we trace effects to their original cause. The primary springs of action for ever elude our most diligent search.

FROM the nice connexion and regular disposition of things, and from the accurate fitness of means to ends, it appears that the Cause of nature must be an intentional and voluntary cause. And as he superintends by the principles of wisdom, so he acts for the order and happiness of his creation ; or, in other words, his principle of action is goodness. But how a being thus qualified and disposed to govern his own works could permit the entrance and duration of evil, seems to be a question of no easy solution. For what vicissitude in nature could escape the foresight of infinite wisdom ? what opposite force could check the operations of almighty power ? what specious appearance could deceive, or what irresistible motive induce, infinite goodness to admit, and continue under

der its government, actions and qualities diametrically opposite to its nature and ends? Nor is their number so few, nor their consequences so light, as to be thought trivial, if the creation where they exist be of any importance.

FROM the pre-eminence and distinguished perfections of human nature, it is justly said to bear the immediate signature of divinity ; nor is it too much arrogance to think man the lineal descendant of God's parental goodness, and the peculiar object of his care. But who will say that this amounts to demonstration ? or what uninspired tongue will pretend to assure us, that we are not the product of some inferior agent ? or that our being is not the result of general laws established in nature, without any particular intention or exertion of providence ?

FROM the natural tendency of virtue to happiness, and of vice to misery ; and from the beneficent constitution of nature, enriched for our supply, and adorned for our delight ; we may fairly conclude, that it was the plan of providence to exercise a mild do-

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minion,

minion, and preserve a favourable intercourse with man, to hear the language of his wants and pains, to be pleased with his admiration and gratitude. Yet wars, inundations, earthquakes, or pestilence, seem to set our nature in a less important light. The numerous triumphs of vice in its most sinister views, the frequent defeats of virtue in its most public and disinterested schemes, seem to shake the connexion between heaven and earth, and inspire fears, which no man can resist, that human happiness is no necessary end of the divine administration.

NOR is this all: If in any one part of God's universal dominion, or in any one period of his reign, the natural tendencies and visible sanctions of virtue and vice do not operate their full and complete effect, what conclusive arguments can we draw from the light of nature to prove, that in any other part, or in any other period, the distribution of good and evil shall be more just and equal? The philosopher boldly answers, That this order shall take place in an immortal state. But who told him this? If retributions are not equally administered here, whence can we infer

infer that they will ever be so? Who informed us that there is more justice or goodness in nature, than we actually see exerted? Is it from its effects that we conclude the existence of a supreme Cause? How then can we attribute to that Cause, either perfections different in kind, or higher in degree, than such as are actually conspicuous in his works?

NEITHER are the natural arguments which support the soul's immortality more conclusive. A self-moving power may, for any thing we know, be as compatible with matter, as the supposition that it is influenced by an immaterial being: And though we perceive mind actually distinct from body, yet that perception is no demonstration of its truth; nor can it ever prove, beyond all hesitation, that sensation is any more than external impulse acting upon our nerves. Why then may not ideas be impressions of impressions? And as their relations or differences arise from their nature, and are consequently parts of themselves; what is reasoning more than a regular series of impressions? The same chain of argu-

ment will hold in those ideas which interest the will. Pleasing or painful impressions, produce pleasing or painful ideas. These are examined, balanced, and compounded, whilst the mind is in hesitation, till she at last reposes in that which is most agreeable or least uneasy; and this acquiescence is the determination of the will. Neither will the dictates of conscience assist our philosopher; for these are very different in degree, at different periods; and it is frequently difficult to distinguish the sentiments of nature from those of habit and prejudice.

THAT every impartial thinker will meet with these obstacles in the way to truth, cannot be denied; though, at the same time, it must be acknowledged, that all the truths to which we have objected are attended with evidence superior to the gloom in which they are involved. But will it be said that these evidences are demonstrative? Are they such as place the human intellect beyond doubt or hesitation? By no means. Much time may be spent in honest, painful, and anxious inquiry; reason may long wander by her own uncertain twilight, and never extricate herself

herself from the mingled maze of truth and error in which she is placed. — Such was the helpless state of human understanding, when our compassionate Creator revealed his will, formerly by the Patriarchs and Prophets, and in these last days by his Son Jesus Christ. This brings us, in the *second* place, to shew,

SECTION II.

THAT the evidences which support Christianity are equally strong, and more universally intelligible than those of natural religion.

WHOEVER, with the most honest intentions, would attempt to compare the evidences, or state the difficulties of natural and revealed religion, must expect to meet with the common objection, that he shakes the foundation to fix the superstructure; that he pays revelation a compliment at the expence of nature; that he detracts from one dispensation of God, to enhance another. But the fallacy of those cavils will easily appear,

appear, when it is considered, that, in our view of natural religion, the arguments are related, not obscured; and the difficulties recapitulated, not created. If, by representing things as they are, and comparing them one with another, some should lose, and others gain by the contrast; surely this can reflect no blame on the impartial comparer. Do we then derogate from this excellent faculty of reason? God forbid. Though dim and depraved by hereditary darkness, and by superinduced prejudices, still it retains many traces of the divine similitude; still its heavenly features, however disguised, assert the sublimity of its origin. Reason, it must be acknowledged, can survey her own form, and recognise her own operations; she can look through material nature, and investigate the chain of causes and effects, by which the vast and complex machine is preserved and regulated; she can explore, to an indefinite extent, the various modifications and relations of space and quantity; she can discern the constitution of moral agents, detect their motives, and judge from what characters and dispositions their actions flow; she can weigh the force of moral evidence, determine the vera-

city of testimonies, and fix the degree of credit which they deserve. But when she extends the sphere of her vision to the nature, attributes, and counsels of that Being who is immense and eternal, can we wonder to find her lost in the abyss of Deity? All our percipient powers are suited to the objects with which it is proper we should be most conversant. Minuteness and magnitude equally elude our corporeal senses, when the objects in which they exist are too great or too small. The mighty orb whose surface we inhabit, is but partially beheld, even by such eyes as command the most extensive prospects; and how many myriads of living atoms croud the ambient air, which entirely escape our perception? Is it then surprising, that our internal structure should be fitted for those objects, in which, during the present period of its progress, it is peculiarly concerned?

THE evidences of Christianity are either external and positive, as the testimony by which it is supported, the visible interpositions of God in its favour, the accomplishment of prophecy, and others of the same kind; or they are intrinsic, and consist in
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its congruity to the nature of God and man, or in the real and blissful communications of the Holy Spirit with the human soul.

It must be observed here, that from the nature and essence of different truths, different kinds and degrees of evidence become necessary. Relations between ideas merely intellectual can only be ascertained by reason; but sense alone, whether in an immediate or secondary way, is the proper and ultimate judge of facts. Reason may indeed examine and correct the instruments or medium of sensation; but we cannot prove, by abstract argument, that any event has, or has not happened. Neither can there be any appeal from the testimony of sense, in its right and natural state; for the very materials on which the mind must form her conclusions are sensible: so that the decision of reason concerning sensible objects, must depend on principles originally derived from sensation. We may indeed determine the rectitude of one sense by another, or by itself in other circumstances; but, beyond this, reason will not carry us. When, therefore, any matter of fact appears to the mind supported by the fullest

fullest sensible evidence, it ought from that moment to become a principle of action; but especially when a series of connected facts join their force to establish one general conclusion. These are the circumstances of the witnesses that attest Christianity. If they themselves are deceived, the delusion must be consistent, successive, and uniform. It must be an effectual change in all the natural avenues of perception. An interposition of this kind is unaccountable from all the powers of nature, and must consequently be the work of some superior agent. Since then a miracle must be supposed, whether is it more reasonable to believe the change produced in the sense of perceiving, or the object perceived? The one is an action worthy of God; the other would be mere trick and childish imposition. If it is urged, that the witnesses are interested to deceive, we should be glad to know how. Were their views ambitious or lucrative? Had they not known before, experience now sensibly taught them, that ignominy and poverty were all the immediate portion they could expect. They knew, both from the nature of things, and from the dictates of their Master, that

the beginning of their task was a final and an effectual adieu to ease and pleasure. They had no prospect of aggrandising themselves; for they relate their own faults, and those of their brethren, with candour and impartiality. Nor, for the same reason, could their end be to raise the public character of their nation. They were at once to combat popular and philosophical prejudices. All the force of custom, and all the propensities of corrupted nature were against them. With these difficulties they were destined to struggle, independent of any human resource or visible assistance. Nor were they internally qualified for so arduous a task by those advantages which the philosophers and Rabbins of the times so loudly boasted. Uninstructed but by God himself, their wisdom eclipsed all the sophistical knowledge which malice, cunning, or prejudice could collect against them.

As these evidences are clear and convincing, so have they almost the force of intuitive truth. For they are not conclusions emerging from a long and laborious search, but pour their radiance on the mind at once,
and

and exhibit, at one view, the full conviction of their reality. Neither are they confined to the closet, but open and perceptible to every rational creature. Nor can any manifestations of truth be more simple and natural than those of sense and testimony. Besides, it ought to be considered, that, in natural religion, the very principles of inquiry led us to the difficulties we found ; whereas, in the present case, no such difficulties are, or can be implied in sensible impressions, or proper testimonies.

WE come now to the arguments in favour of Christianity resulting from prophecy. But this is a field so capacious, that we can only take a cursory view of the most conspicuous objects which it presents. Let it however be observed, in the first place, That if prophecy be susceptible of any interpretation, there must be one meaning more suitable to it than all others, which is consequently its genuine explication. Though therefore any event may, in some circumstances, be adapted to certain prophecies ; yet if the occurrence predicted be not equal to the prediction in its whole nature and extent, then must it

be referred to some other object: Nor is there any absurdity in supposing one event prefigured by another, or one prophecy equally significant of both; whilst its ultimate completion is only found in the last and greatest. These observations will solve the objection which modern infidelity boasts as one of her most important discoveries.

OTHER evasive arguments have been invented by the obstinate Jews, to elude the force of particular predictions; but these pertinacious sophists have only discovered the impotence of human knowledge, when it forgets its proper sphere, and opposes the Spirit of God. For though a number of particular prophecies should remain inscrutable to us; yet if, in the general tenor of prophetic writings received both by Jews and Christians, some grand and important revolutions, as well in the natural as moral world, be implied, which are now actually accomplished; then is the validity of prophecy in general confirmed.

NOR will it avail the cause of error to darken particular oracles by the unavoidable imperfection

perfection of language. For the particular facts which they imply, are either necessarily promotive of the grand events in which all the prophecies terminate ; or so closely connected with them, that prejudiced inquirers alone can mistake them.

ATTEMPTS to render particular prophecies equivocal, from analogy of circumstances, are no less vain : For though any preface should be, in some measure, explicable by a particular occurrence ; yet if it corresponds not to the figures by which it is signified in their utmost latitude, the interpretation must still remain imperfect, and cannot therefore be the ultimate intention of the divine Spirit. Hence it will follow, that if the solutions offered by us are most agreeable both to the general scope and particular ends of prophecy, they have the best right to our assent.

To recapitulate all the prophecies which were significant of the Christian dispensation, and are ultimately accomplished in it, would be a work incompatible with my present design, which is only to compare the evidences

vidences of natural and revealed religion, that from thence it may appear, which of the two involves the strongest conviction, and which is best adapted to the capacities and improvements of mankind in general. For this end, it will be sufficient only to enumerate a few of these prophecies concerning the nature, incarnation, offices, miracles, doctrines, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, in which the divine Spirit gives its testimony, in the clearest and most conspicuous manner, to the gospel.

THAT the divine and human natures were to be united in the same person, appears from that enmity which God declares he will place between the seed of the woman, and the adherents of the serpent; and from that solemn filiation, thus recited by the Psalmist as the fixed decree of God, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee;" and from that other declaration, "God, thy God, hath anointed thee." It is also plain from the injunction given to the prophet, "thou shalt call his name IMMANUEL," a word in its primary signification importing, a God connected with human nature, and residing amongst

amongst men. It likewise merits our attention, that this miraculous child was to be born of a virgin; see Isaiah, chap. vii. 14. collated with Matth. i. 23. His holiness, and the establishment of his religion among the nations, is thus predicted by Isaiah, chap. xlii. 1. "Behold my servant whom
 " I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul
 " delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him,
 " he shall bring forth judgment to the Gen-
 " tiles." And by Daniel in these words, which also imply the time of his arrival,
 " Seventy weeks are determined upon thy
 " people, and upon thy holy city, to finish
 " the transgression, and to make an end of
 " sins, and to make reconciliation for iniqui-
 " ty, and to bring in everlasting righteous-
 " ness, and to seal up the vision and prophe-
 " cy, and to anoint the Most Holy." This distinguished æra is no less plainly pointed out by Moses, when he tells us, Gen. xlix. 10. that, "the sceptre shall not depart from
 " Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his
 " feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him
 " shall the gathering of the people be." The word SHILOH, by the seventy interpreters, is rendered *the accomplishment of the promises*;

a sense of which the word can only be susceptible, from its reference to that important event to which the general spirit of the prophecy leads us. But it deserves to be remarked, that as, after its wandering state, the first residence of the tabernacle was at Shiloh; so the person who should once more fix the state of his church, by terminating the duration of typical rites, was properly signified by that name. There are likewise passages in Daniel and Isaiah, though too numerous, and too long for quotation, which mark the period in the New Testament signified by *the fulness of time*, to be during the fourth monarchy, and within the seventy years commencing from the publication of the edict for the return of the Jews from Babylon, and, in short, during the continuance of the second temple. For the God of Hosts declared by Haggai, that then "the desire of all nations should come," whose glory should fill that house, and render it more illustrious than the former; and by Malachi, in whom the Spirit likewise testifies, "that a messenger should prepare his way before him, when the Lord whom they sought should suddenly come to his temple, even
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“ the messenger of the covenant, in whom they
“ delighted.” This harbinger of incarnate
divinity is undoubtedly the same whom o-
ther prophets understood by the person, who,
“ coming in the spirit and power of Elias,
“ was as the voice of one crying in the de-
“ sert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make
“ his paths straight ;” which clearly mark
the character of John the Baptist, who pre-
ceded our Saviour.

It farther appears, that Jesus was born at
Bethlehem, the very place distinguished by
God himself for that event, when, by Mi-
cah, he thus addresses the city: “ But thou
“ Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little
“ among the thousands of Judah, yet out of
“ thee shall he come forth unto me that is
“ to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth
“ have been from of old, from everlasting.”
This, compared with the speech of the an-
gels, Luke ii. 11. ought to strike the mind
of incredulity with irresistible conviction.
Thus also the prophets have deduced the
Messiah; from Abraham, for “ in him (ac-
“ cording to Moses) shall all nations be
“ blessed ;” from Isaac, for “ in Isaac (says
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“ the same inspired author) shall thy seed be
“ called ;” from Jacob, for “ a star shall a-
“ rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall pro-
“ ceed from Israel ;” and from Judah, as it
appears in the sublime and pathetic address
of his expiring father, who, in the most
bold and lofty figures, describes his son’s
behaviour, and that of his descendents, till
the arrival of SHILOH. The original signifi-
cation of the Hebrew word, as applied to a
person, seems to be a *Peace-maker* or *Sa-
viour*: And from the Jewish historians it is
evident, that the tribe of Judah not only
continued distinct in itself, but retained pecu-
liar marks of precedence, and produced a
succession of monarchs, which, beginning
in David, reached even to the Babylonish
captivity. After which, regaining the su-
preme power, it continued to preside, with
little interruption, except from the Macca-
bees, till the accession of Herod, who ascend-
ed the throne under the tuition of Rome,
and, at the birth of our Saviour, rendered
himself infamous by the execrable murder
which he inflicted upon the infants, lest in
his person the royal dignity should again
return to Judah. Lastly, They deduce his
genealogy

genealogy from David, from whom the Almighty promises, by the mouth of Jeremiah, "to raise a righteous Branch." All these circumstances plainly unite in the birth of Jesus, whose descent is clearly derived from the patriarchs and the king by the evangelists.

WITH relation to his character and offices, any modest and impartial inquirer may be satisfied from an attentive perusal of the 2d and 110th psalms, and from the 53d chapter of Isaiah; where you will find the person so exactly delineated, his functions so precisely specified, and the state of his kingdom so strongly painted, as they are afterwards discovered in the gospel, that invincible prejudice alone can resist the sacred effulgence of these divine truths. With no less sublimity and accuracy do the prophets expatiate on these admirable exertions of supernatural power which conspicuously shewed the superior dignity of our Redeemer, since the laws of nature can only be suspended or reversed by her almighty Superintendant. The different situations in which he acted, and the sublime doctrines which he taught, are also described by these inspired sages

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with great perspicuity; when they inform us, that God would raise up a Prophet in Israel, whose words should be immediately inspired from heaven, and who should speak all that his Lord commanded him, Deut. xviii. 18; when they assure us, that a period shall come, in which "many nations shall say, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," Micah iv. 2.; and when they tell us, That "the eyes of the blind shall then be opened, and the ears of the deaf expanded; that the lame shall leap like harts, and the dumb express their exultation with their tongues." Thus the disciples of John, when solemnly sent to inquire of Jesus who he was, are desired to inform their master what they had heard and seen; that "the blind received their sight, the deaf heard, and the lame walked." As events previous to the birth of our Saviour were clearly foretold, that they might be the signals of his appearance; so the most important vicissitudes of human life which happened

happened posterior to his arrival, and are, in some measure, its consequences, have been discovered by the same omniscient Spirit. For Daniel, after specifying the time of this important occurrence, adds, that the "Messiah should be cut off, not for himself, but for his people:" Soon after which, that the city should be destroyed, its end accompanied with an inundation, and desolation should attend the progress of the war till its destruction. Zechariah affirms, that on that day should be extirpated the very name of idols, and their false divinities no longer adored in Israel. In vain is it objected among the Jews, that, by the prophetic account, their Messiah should be invested with external dominion, and appear in all the magnificence of a royal conqueror; since it is plain, that the glory of his kingdom was not described as consisting in outward power and authority, nor in the noise and parade of visible triumphs; but, on the contrary, his person and character, whilst on earth, were marked by a number of humbling circumstances: For his compatriots "hid their faces from him; he was despised and rejected by his fellow-creatures, a man of

“ of sorrows, and familiarly acquainted with
 “ grief.” He is likewise described as entering Jerusalem on an ass’s colt. Nor did the celestial oracles ever point him out as the temporal deliverer of Judea, who should once more restore it to independent authority, and exercise a regal power over all its children. Even his spiritual kingdom, which the prophets delineated, was not intended for the Jews exclusive of others, nor designed to comprehend all the natural descendants of their primogenitors.

THUS far concerning the validity and accomplishment of prophecy in Jesus. Now if the testimony of witnesses, as the immediate spectators of the facts which they relate, can merit our confidence, how much more cogent is that of men, who, by inspiration, relate a succession of events, considerable in their number, peculiar in their nature, remote in their completion, and important in their effects, when, in the progress of human affairs, these very events at last arise in every circumstance correspondent to the original discovery?

AGAIN,

AGAIN: The evidence of any revelation has been said to consist in the excellence of its doctrines, and their congruity to the nature of God and man. But as this topic has been treated with great accuracy by others, and even occasionally by myself, it may perhaps be less necessary to give a minute detail of it in this place. Let us therefore only recapitulate those principles which are essential to the Christian religion, so far as they are conducive to the illustration of our present design; in which it is proposed to shew, by fair arguments, that the doctrines of the gospel are at least equally evident, and much more consolatory than those which result from reason and the light of nature.

As man is endued with the powers of perception and action, these faculties, essential to his frame, must have their proper objects. Hence the indissoluble relation of human nature to truth and good. I call it *indissoluble*; because, notwithstanding our present degeneracy, truth and good are still the immutable objects of our pursuit. But precipitated by violent impressions, ungovernable appetites, temerary judgments, or false opinions,

opinions, we mistake resemblances for things, and, deceived by similar appearances, explore substantial truth and good, where, in reality, they cannot be found. Yet this wrong direction of our views and efforts destroys not our first proposition, that man, as possessed of intelligence and motion, is inviolably related to truth and good. For, by his perceptive faculties, he is qualified to distinguish agreeable from disagreeable, real from fictitious impressions; and, by his active powers, he is enabled and impelled to seek, obtain, and cultivate such as yield substantial delight; or reject their contraries. Hence every principle of action essentially implies something to be known, and something to be pursued or shunned. Thus the Christian religion partly relates to faith, and partly to practice. Its theory consists in the knowledge of God and man; its precepts are the duties resulting from these discoveries. This scheme, under each of these forms, so far as our plan proposed will permit, we shall consider.

In the Christian system, then, we are taught to believe, that there is one eternal,
indivisible,

indivisible, self-existent, almighty, omniscient, and infinitely good and just Being, who originally formed, and continually superintends, that universe which is the product of his omnipotent word ; that he conducts every revolution, whether of rational, conscious, progressive, or inanimate existence, with the most unerring and consummate rectitude, but each by laws adapted to their various natures. Thus, whilst the insensible creation is moved by attraction and impulse alone, those who partake the nobler gifts of consciousness, reason, and freedom, are conducted and determined by uniform instincts, sensible impressions, or moral motives, according to their different degrees of perfection.

IN this essential union eternally subsist three distinct Persons ; distinct not in their essence nor attributes, but in their properties and relations ; the Father eternally begetting the Son, the Son eternally begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from both. This infinitely perfect Being, in the most proper period of his ineffable duration, created man, and impressed him with his own image. But, to diffuse

fraternal sentiments, and to establish a tender relation amongst all the species, he wisely ordained the whole race to spring from two original representatives, one father and one mother. From these, as participants of reason and choice, he exacted such terms as, in their own nature, were equally incumbent on all their descendants, even universal, perfect, and implicit obedience to all his commands. But as the glory of God is most effectually displayed in the happiness of his creatures, so the good of his intelligent offspring must have been peculiarly designed in their formation.

THUS man, as a moral agent, had faculties adapted to the perception and attainment of substantial good. These taught him to discern not only what it was, but also to pursue it by the most certain and practicable means. Thus did the most essential propensities of his frame, and, of course, the most important actions of his conduct, coincide with the will of his Creator. His obedience therefore could not be tried, by enjoining such a character and behaviour as, prior to that commandment, he might naturally be expected

expected to assume; so that the signal of his obedience could either be no effectual test, or must have been indifferent in its own nature, since God could never inculcate what was intrinsically evil. Superficial thinkers, when they pronounce it inconsistent with the divine attributes to damn the whole race of mankind, because their progenitors eat an apple, forget, that the crime consisted not in the simple action, but in that depravity of heart, that violation of obedience, which it involved. It would be wise in such to recollect, that all actions, merely as such, are equivocal, and only to be characterised as good or evil by the dispositions which animate, and the effects which succeed them.

MAN having disobeyed his Maker and his Sovereign, not only polluted his nature and debilitated his powers, but became obnoxious to death here and perdition hereafter. All the streams which flowed from this tainted source, partook its malignant qualities. Human life became one succession of guilt and sorrow, one race devoted to error and involved in misery, which were alternately instructed and chastised, as it appear-

ed most conducive to the ends of divine administration, till the unerring wisdom of Heaven selected from the rest of mankind a peculiar people, who, under its own immediate tuition, governed by laws which were confirmed with its own sanction, and placed in a situation remote from a vicious and idolatrous world, were thus prepared and destined at once to facilitate and confirm the plan adopted by celestial wisdom for the recovery of human affairs.

FROM these the Son of God assumed his human nature, and, in that character, enlightened the world with such wise and excellent precepts both for life and salvation, as, if properly observed, must infallibly render us happy in all the periods of our being. He taught us, that the native source of all religious or social duties was love to God, and benevolence for man, as these sentiments were variously modified by our different relations to each; that our duty to God was dictated by the excellency of his nature, the number and importance of his benefits, the various relations in which he is discovered to us, and the different circumstances of

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our nature, from whence these connections result. His infinite power should naturally inspire us with astonishment and awe; his consummate wisdom, with reverence and admiration; his boundless goodness, with love, gratitude, and esteem; his inflexible justice, with veneration and watchfulness; his universal presence, with different motives and sentiments, according to the different reports of conscience, in its reviews of our temper and conduct. But when these perfections are presented to reason, as exerted in the production, preservation, and improvement of our existence, all the sentiments formerly impressed by these surprising and amiable views of Deity, will not only rise in ardour and vivacity, but likewise spontaneously discover themselves by such external and sensible signs as are naturally significant of them.

OUR sense of power exerted in creating and sustaining the universe, naturally dictates to the soul expressions of dependence and admiration. Wisdom and goodness engaged in the same sublime and amiable task, impell the soul to pour forth all her feelings in acknowledgment and praise. The painful

ful perception of native indigence, the frequent and sensible importunities of returning want, the uncertainty of life and health, the restless fluctuation of all corporeal possessions and enjoyments, force the heart and mind, by an irresistible impulse, to effuse their unpremeditated wishes before their Creator. Consciousness of guilt shews the necessity of expiation, and that original impurity, which we feel mixed with all our sentiments and actions, is a living and expressive lesson, that sanctification is indispensable to our happiness.

SINCE therefore we feel our nature incapable of restitution by its own powers; since we can neither atone for our crimes, nor regain our primitive rectitude, we must have recourse to God for both. Accordingly JESUS, as the great representative of our nature, having fulfilled all its obligations, and pointed out the true and living way to eternal happiness, both by his examples and his precepts; at length gave himself a ransom for our guilt, and re-ascended in his human nature to the right hand of his Father, from whence he shall once more return, in all the
majesty

majesty of displayed omnipotence, to judge his creatures.

It is impossible for man to merit any thing from God; yet those who have lived agreeably to his example and injunctions shall rise with him to everlasting life, and those of a contrary character sink to endless perdition. Such are the theological views inspired by the gospel.

THE duties which it dictates towards our neighbour, though often more particularly delineated, are summed up in this short precept, To do to others whatever, in similar circumstances, we might reasonably expect from them. But on these doctrines it is less necessary to expatiate, as they only superadd the eternal and revealed authority of God to the universal and permanent obligations of nature and morality, improved and refined.

THE same thing may be said concerning those duties which we owe to ourselves; they natively arise from our frame and circumstances. Christianity adds no new extrinsic

trinsic or difficult observances ; the dispositions which it prescribes as essential to a perfect character, and the offices which genuinely arise from them, are the dictates of Wisdom intent on the happiness of her children. To this even the precepts of mortification are no exception. But these have been so rigidly taught, and the principles from which they flow so diffusely treated by other philosophers, that the natural theologian, or moral student, can, with no propriety, impute to the Christian religion as a fault, what the severe Stoic and relaxed Epicurean have conspired to inculcate as essential to human felicity. This however we have treated more fully in a discourse concerning the true dignity and happiness of man.

THE influences of the divine Spirit have likewise been hinted as arguments for the reality of Christian doctrine. JESUS, in that valedictory oration, from whence the passage now under our consideration is taken, repeatedly promises his disciples “ another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world could not receive ;” because, immersed in the prejudices of sense, and bewildered in the mazes of error, their perceptive

ceptive faculties were too gross to see him, their apprehensions too turbid and obtuse to know him. In consequence of a promise so frequently reiterated, the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles, with visible marks of divine interposition, before their departure from Jerusalem. But the operations of this celestial Power are now less conspicuous, both in their visible and internal effects; so that the conviction of their own reality, and of the truths which they testify, can be nowhere so lively and permanent, as in the souls which they immediately irradiate and refine. Nor is it strange that the natural man should not discern the things of the Spirit; for, in all other cases, a simple perception can only be excited by its proper object. The ideas of sound and colour, of proportion and symmetry, of beauty and harmony, are never found in the mind, till the objects by which these pleasing sensations or emotions are inspired have been presented to our observation. How then should we rightly apprehend the nature and effects of communicated grace, before they are felt? or how can we explain to others sensations for which language has no words, and to

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which the persons whom we would enlighten have no feelings analogous in their own minds? Besides, the influences of the Spirit in suggesting motives to the understanding, in arming the conscience with superior energy, or in warming and refining the nobler affections, frequently co-operate with the natural faculties of the soul, and is not to be distinguished from them. But though the immediate interposition of these supernatural causes be often imperceptible, yet the effects which they produce are nevertheless real and sensible: nor can we otherwise account for those instantaneous and total reformatations which have sometimes appeared in the human temper and conduct, from the grossest and most habitual depravity, to virtue and goodness.

COMMUNION between God and the soul has been universally admitted amongst the religious tenets of every age and country; and, without the illuminations of a Spirit to whom all the revolutions of futurity were obvious, it would be impossible to give any solution of those prophecies, and their correspondent

respondent events, which we have formerly reviewed. From these reflections it must follow, that though infidelity cannot feel, yet neither can she refute, the reality and effects of inspiration. Believers indeed may neither be able to communicate their impressions, nor the evidences which attend them, to other minds; yet the evidences themselves are no less rational and persuasive to those understandings which feel their energy.

It has been objected, That such supernatural impulses would be incompatible with freedom of action. But surely if advice and instruction are compatible with liberty and choice, the divine Spirit impresses no other violence on the human will. Our faculties are neither annihilated nor suspended in their progress, but enlightened and aided by these emanations of superior wisdom. All the powers essential to man, as an accountable creature, are indulged in full and free exertion; so that every attainment in virtue, every relapse in vice, may be ascribed or imputed to the soul with equal propriety as the genuine effects of her own operations.

IT remains then, in the *third* place, that we compare the difficulties that occur in natural and revealed religion.

SECTION III.

IF the votaries of natural religion would be consistent with themselves, let them remember, that, upon some occasions, gaping wonder and indecent ridicule are certain indications of ignorance and folly. This precaution will suppress their astonishment, and chastise their wit, when they observe the teachers of Christianity recommending faith with so much ardour and assiduity. For the apostles tell us with one voice, that from this maternal grace all the other virtues lineally descend; and that by faith alone we are justified and saved.

THE freethinker, who laughs at this doctrine, forgets, that all the liberal or mechanical arts presuppose theory as indispensibly necessary to practice: and shall the art of life, to which all others are subservient, proceed upon no principles at all?

SURELY

X SURELY natural religion itself, however simple and universal, must enjoin its pupils to believe that God exists, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him; otherwise, for what end is he worshipped? Nothing can be more absurd than to maintain a possibility of rational action without motives. Motives essentially imply a persuasion that one course of action is preferable to another, or that means and ends are more or less eligible or practicable. What then is this persuasion but faith? They who imagine this divine principle a blind or unenlightened impulse, which supersedes the force of reason, and confronts the understanding in all its determinations, grossly misrepresent it.

THE province of faith is not to counteract, but to assist reason, and to determine concerning such objects as lie beyond its prospect. The intricacies which have already embarrassed our search, when exploring the principles of natural religion, and other obstacles which may still occur, may sufficiently convince us, that there is an intellectual, as well as material horizon, in
which

which the prospect of the soul, no less than of the body, terminates in darkness and confusion. Effectually to discover such truths as are essentially previous to action, and perspicuous to reason, we must frequently take a remote and indistinct view of others which are too sublime for our comprehension. Thus we know that God exists from eternity to eternity; but what eternity, as a divine attribute, is, we can by no means conceive. For all our notions of duration arise from a perception of continued existence, divided by the succession of our own ideas, or the revolutions of external objects. But the divine knowledge is one undivided idea, and the divine operation one continued act; from neither of which the idea of succession can proceed.

WE are also convinced that God is one; yet all attempts to demonstrate this unity from reason have proved abortive. If it be said, that self-existence can only belong to one being, I should be glad to know why; for it is not sufficient to deny the necessity of supposing more. One infinite being may serve all the purposes of creation and providence;

dence; but this is no reason why others equally perfect may not exist. They deserve no better name than *metaphysical quibblers*, who affirm, that one infinite being exhausts the whole genus or kind, and therefore two are impossible: For we might as well be told, that there could be but one infinite existence, because such a one would necessarily absorb and contain all the others; yet we find the existence of God highly compatible with that of inferior spirits, and even of matter. Number, space, and duration, are infinite; yet these infinities do not one devour another. Nay matter, though finite in itself, is proved by philosophers infinitely divisible: each infinitesimal of which may again be infinitely divided; yet these infinities, though subordinate one to another *ad infinitum*, are still real and distinct. Why then, by the same reasoning, may there not be infinite beings involving infinite beings without number? But it is said, That from the unity of design in nature, the unity of its designing agent may be inferred; for different beings engaged in the creation and government of things, would have been different in their counsels and operations. This argument

gument however is equally fallacious, since any number of beings infinitely perfect must have adopted the same plan, and the same method of execution ; so that whatever number of creators were employed, their productions would still be the best of all possible systems, and consequently the designs of each would be one. There is a much plainer proof, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God "is one Lord." Once more, "There be "that are called Gods many, and Lords "many ; yet to us there is but one Lord," &c.

AGAIN: We believe that God created the world in time ; for if it subsisted from eternity, it subsisted prior to creation, and therefore had no need of a maker ; but if it was formed in time, what could induce infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, to pass an unactive eternity before they began to operate ? for this must have happened at whatever period of duration their operations commenced. Now, since it is allowed, that neither the parts of space, nor those of duration, can be different one from another ; what could determine the divine mind in favour of any particular

particular portion, for the period or situation of his works ? For as no single part involved a cause of preference in itself, why did the supreme Reason chuse any at all ? Though this will not disprove the fact of creation, it shews how little we are qualified to account for it.

FURTHER : We are persuaded that God foreknows and governs all the transactions of his boundless and everlasting dominion. One of two things must be granted, that all events are either certain or contingent. But if the revolutions of the universe be fortuitous, then the divine prescience can only perceive them as such, and the most sacred counsels of God must proceed upon probabilities alone. If events be certain, they must either be determined by the Deity, or some extrinsic power. Such a power to regulate the course of things, without his interposition, must be superior to his own ; so that God is either not omnipotent, or solely concerned in the government of things. Hence he must determine what course of action is pursued, and what degree of happiness or misery shared by every creature of

his hand, in all the periods of its being. From this will follow consequences of no less importance than the doctrines of election and reprobation, so dreadful to some philosophers. Now let these all-discerning sages, to whom the veil of nature and providence is so translucent, reconcile such tenets with their notions of divine justice, or with the freedom of a moral agent.

WHEN these difficulties are obviated, others more formidable will still remain. For, from the liberal profusion with which conscious and intellectual beings are so regularly supplied, we may fairly deduce the goodness of the universal Benefactor. How then could evil enter into the world? how could its empire become so extensive, or its effects so fatal and permanent?

IT is urged, That the fall of man, by the abuse of his original freedom, can be no satisfactory account of this extraordinary phenomenon. It is therefore no more than equitable to demand of the philosopher a more plausible solution. The fact is undeniable; the whole sensible creation feel and deplore

plore its reality. Whence then proceeded this distortion of nature? or why are deformity and misery still suffered to prevail in the works of a perfect and omnipotent Artificer? Is philosophy silent? how then can she pretend to fix the boundaries, or limit the duration of evil, whilst its origin and progress remain inscrutable mysteries? Have we so fully explored the influence of exemplary pains inflicted on moral beings, so exactly ascertained the full extent and ultimate ends of divine government, that we can appoint evil its proper destination, or prescribe the period of its continuance, and the end of its progress. If we can actually trace but a few links in the chain of providence, why do we so loudly recriminate, when we hear of eternal punishments?

THE universal presence of Deity will be disputed by no rational explorer of nature. It is a maxim confirmed by all who understand physical causes and effects, that no being can act where it is not. Must we then say with the schoolmen, that God is wholly and entirely present in every point of space; yet, at the same time, equally

diffused through the whole immensity ? Or will it not be more candid to acknowledge the general truth, without pretending that the manner of its existence is intelligible ?

AFTER these fruitless researches into the nature of the Divinity, and the conduct of his providence ; is it a matter so incredible, that three distinct Persons should subsist in one indivisible essence ? The pretended absurdity of three intelligent Agents, in one intelligent Agent, is not in the nature of the thing, but in the false conceptions of those who would reduce it to an inconsistency. It is strange to find that men, whose notions of personality, even in its most familiar sense, are far from being clear and determined, should understand so well in the divine nature, what they are at a loss to ascertain in their own. Are the same temporary and ambiguous indications of personal identity, by which it is ascertained either in ourselves or others, applicable to a perfect and immutable existence ? Is God the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, because he has an eternal consciousness of identity, which unites all his thoughts and actions in the same person, and,

and, by these recollections, discovers that the *Ipsè* of the past, is also the very *Ipsè* of the present ? Or does he manifest the identity of his divinity to his creatures, by exhibiting external representations and uniform appearances ? The casuistry of jurisprudential writers is famous even to a proverb ; yet if any one will consult them where they treat of personal rights, he will find their most exquisite subtlety miserably puzzled in determining what constitutes a *person*. The word therefore, when cautiously used to point out a distinction in the divine nature which we do not understand, may be harmless and convenient ; but if limited to the same sense in which it is employed when we speak of human beings, it will no more enlighten, but confound our inquiry. It is, however, sufficient for all the purposes of faith, that we believe, as the scripture teaches, a real distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, without endeavouring to be wise above what is written, or attempting to explain that distinction, which to us, in our present circumstances, is veiled in sacred and impenetrable darkness, otherwise than by the obvious

vious relations and properties which it implies.

Is it for us who are so little acquainted with the proper means employed in the divine administration, or the sublime and inscrutable gradations of its procedure, to affirm, that God, in all places, and in all times, is under a moral necessity to put the means of happiness in the power of men? Whether the doctrines of Christianity are essential to human felicity, or indifferent, these arrogant reasoners will find their favourite point refuted by fact. For it must be acknowledged, that all understandings are not equally capacious, nor all minds equally susceptible of moral impressions. But though the faculties of men were allowed equal, yet the necessities of life require that they should be differently exerted. Hence some are more at leisure to cultivate their moral and rational powers, more devoted to those attainments and pursuits, than others. Will it be said, that the artisan and the student, the savage and the philosopher, are equally enlightened in the theory of human happiness? Will it be maintained, that Scythia
and

and Greece were in a situation equally favourable to moral speculation, or could equally regulate their conduct by the dictates of refined humanity, and the relations of social life?

CONCERNING the doctrines of merit and imputation, so warmly opposed by our antagonists, it may be sufficient here to observe, That the word *merit*, though originally a relative term, now admits of various significations. Some things are approved ultimately, and on their own account; others, as adapted to a certain end; and others, as communicating pleasure or advantage, which deserve returns. In the first of these senses, man might be said to have *merit*, when recent from the hands of his Creator; because his faculties were then pure, immaculate, and fit for the original purposes of their formation: but, in the last acceptance of merit, it can with no propriety be ascribed to man, in any period or situation of his being; for having received all from God, he could display no excellence, nor communicate any favour, which was not derived from the divine bounty. Far from
increasing

increasing the glory or happiness of his Maker, he could only promote his own felicity and dignity, by exerting his powers in the service of him who gave them. But when guilt had deformed the original purity of his nature, it could no longer be called *meritorious* in any sense. We must grant, that the intrinsic worth or demerit of one person cannot belong to another, but by communication : yet it is certain, that the consequences of virtue in some, may diffuse their influence to others. Thus the wisdom of a legislator may direct the conduct of his subjects ; thus the goodness of a benefactor may supply the wants of his dependents ; thus the frugality and industry of a father may enrich his children. The Saviour of men being equally invested with the divine and human nature, had every possible claim to merit. In consequence of what he did and suffered, the pollution of sin might be removed by the communication of grace, and its obligation to punishment cancelled by the pains and sorrows which he endured. For though there can be no merit in suffering, yet the dispositions exerted by the sufferer, may be highly meritorious.—But these subjects

subjects have been more copiously explained in our observations from 1 Pet. ii. 24.; from Isaiah lv. 7.; and from Gal. vi. 14.

WE have formerly hinted, that man is a being endued with contemplative and active powers, and that, by each of these constituent parts in his frame, he is related to a different object. His understanding necessarily impels him to the investigation of truth; desire, choice, inclination, and aversion, with all his capacities of enjoyment, allure him to the pursuit of real or apparent good. These, in the order of nature, are posterior one to the other: for before any thing can be called *good*, the reality of its existence and qualities must be ascertained; nor can any intelligent being act without such motives for selecting and rejecting, as are either essentially or apparently true. Thus, in all the principles of rational conduct, speculation is naturally prior to action; because upon the former necessarily depends the latter. Religion is therefore, with great propriety, divided into principles of faith, and rules of practice; nor is this distinction peculiar to Christianity, but common to all religions.

K E I N

X. IN the theory of natural religion, the student may perhaps be surprised to find such numerous and formidable difficulties; but who would be willing to imagine, that the light which it throws upon practice, the rules which it dictates for our conduct, are likewise embarrassed, and susceptible of doubt? Is it not strange, that the very criterion of morality should still be a subject of hesitation and dispute? yet surely no question can be more proper than what determines the morality of an action.

IF *the will or commands of a legislator* be the standard of right and wrong, of good and evil; may we not still farther inquire, how this will is recommended to our attention, how authorised to determine our practice? If by the power of rewards and punishments alone, then the most abject minions of tyrannical cruelty are the most moral of all beings. If, to avoid this rock, we say that these injunctions have intrinsic merit; we should be glad to know in what this excellence consists. It will doubtless be answered, In the beneficent design of a lawgiver, and in the happy effects of his statutes. But still by what avenues of internal perception does the
light

light of nature convey these notices of the divine will to the mind? Is it by the radiant emanations of truth upon the understanding, whence it discovers the eternal relations and differences of things?

LET us observe, that there is a wide distinction between the perception of logical and moral truth. The one is entirely dispassionate, without yielding any pleasure or pain, except the calm satisfaction arising from the activity of the mind, from the felicity of discovery, or from the force of conviction. Moral ideas, on the contrary, when presented with all their amiable or hateful properties, are obvious to the mind at once, and branded with a turpitude, or recommended by a lustre, a beauty, a decorum, which brightens and dignifies them, even independent of their reality. Thus the ideas of magnanimity, temperance, beneficence, when presented to the mind, would be esteemed objects of approbation, though never beheld in any living character.

How then do such agreeable perceptions arise from moral ideas and relations, which

are not found in any ratio of difference or agreement in mathematics? or, in other words, if moral obligation be founded merely on the perception of relation and difference, why do not these abstract truths, which result from all the possible modifications of space and quantity, whose relations and differences are recognised as more fixed and permanent than any other, inspire the same pleasing or painful internal sensations? When I read the noble actions of Gideon, Samson, or other assertors of public liberty; why should they give me a joy different from the conviction, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones? Why should I feel a pleasure in relating or performing a charitable action, different from that which affects me, when I conclude with certainty that two and two make four?

BESIDES: Though it should be granted that the will and commands of a legislator are recommended to our observation and obedience by their beneficent tendency; yet why should the dispositions which prompt, and the actions which produce public or private happiness obtain our preference? Is
the

the supposition impossible, that a creature may be so constituted, as to think every other being and its interests absolutely indifferent to him?

NAY further: Might not a conscious and reasoning agent be formed, whose supreme felicity should consist in the misery and torment of others? This is what the ancient Magi and Manicheans maintained, that from thence they might account for the equal prevalence of good and evil in the world. Such a possibility was objected to a late eminent Philosopher who revived the doctrine of the moral sense. For, according to the antagonists of that great man, if moral approbation or disapprobation should depend on a thing so arbitrary as sensation; why might not the great Artificer of nature create beings susceptible of pleasure from public misery, or of pain from public happiness?

THUS, not only the reality of moral essences themselves, so explicitly maintained by some learned authors, but also that of the faculties by which we perceive them, are warmly

warmly disputed. In effect, the force, the reality, the beauty, the fitness of moral ideas and relations are, in some degree, universally felt and recognised. But by what pencil are certain characters and actions illuminated with such living glory, and inscribed with such vivid marks of approbation? or by what channels are these agreeable perceptions admitted into the mind?

Is virtue rendered lovely in our eyes, because we are connected by *Benevolence* with all reasonable and conscious beings, whose characters are not deformed with vice? "No," it is replied by some, "Benevolence is a blind and indiscriminating instinct; it flows at random with boundless effusion on every object which it meets."

THE principle of moral obligation therefore is a *Sense of rectitude and order*. But do we not daily appeal from these to public happiness? do we not estimate their very worth and existence by it?

MUST we then listen to those who tell us that *Self-love* is the source of all our actions; and that, however disinterested our conduct may

may appear, it is our own interest alone which we inviolably pursue? Upon this hypothesis, it will be hard to account for the liberal sacrifices of wealth, ease, reputation, and even life itself, which have been offered for the good of others. In vain it is urged, that though the social affections tend to promote the good of others, yet they are gratified in ourselves; for all things in which we are concerned, must either be eligible, offensive, or indifferent. If eligible, let us know why, if not from some pleasing sensation immediately felt, or some delightful gratification probably expected. It must be allowed, that the immediate tendency of social affection is not to our own good, but that of others. The pleasure therefore which we feel from the completion of benevolent desire, is not antecedent, but posterior to that propensity; and therefore not its cause, but its consequence. Nor are we charitable, because it is pleasing to promote the good of our fellow-creatures; but, on the contrary, it is delightful to diffuse comfort and happiness, because we are charitable. In dividing the affections, their particular modes, for the most part, are denominated from the objects in which they immediately terminate.

Thus

Thus the sentiment of kindness between brothers, is fraternal ; that of children to their parents, filial ; the passion subsisting between persons of a different sex, is love ; the affection which unites amiable characters merely for their own merit and their similitude, is friendship ; the propensity which we feel to oblige a benefactor, is gratitude. Why then are not the affections, which terminate in ourselves alone, properly termed *selfish* and *interested* ? Why are not those desires which impell us to redress the misfortunes or augment the felicity of others, justly called *benevolent* or *social* ? Is not this distinction as really founded on nature, as any other ? But allowing benevolence to be the mother of the virtues, by what means is that general propensity so suddenly and properly modified, as to operate with propriety in every particular case ?

MUST the theory of moral sentiments, as we have been lately told, be deduced from *Sympathy* ? It may certainly be questioned, whether all the phenomena in the moral world can find their solution in this principle. What connexion has fortitude and
temperance

temperance in ourselves, or distributive justice to others, with sympathy? Do we substitute ourselves for others, in situations where others are not concerned, and where the mind is conscious of no such substitution? Are criminals destined to the gibbet by the sympathy of their judges? We do not here deny, that sympathy is the source of virtue; but simply desire its votaries to account for all the exertions of virtue from this principle.

PERHAPS we still err: Moral worth may consist in the *Balance of affections*. Do we then admire this balance ultimately for itself, or as productive of some higher ends? Does the mind, in all the particular impulses of benevolence or piety, survey its own entire œconomy, before it can perceive the pleasure arising from the sentiment which it feels? Or rather, is not the sentiment approved on its own account, without any retrospect to its relation with the other propensities of the mind?

WHILST the internal frame is thus anatomized to find the source of moral perfection

tion and approbation, is not the transition easy from doubt concerning the instruments of discovery, to hesitation concerning the truth of what they discover? Nor would it be unnatural for a student of ethics to reason in this manner: " In every corporeal
 " perception, I can with as much ease, and
 " as little hesitation, ascertain the sense per-
 " ceiving, as the object perceived. Modi-
 " fications of light and colour are exhi-
 " bited through the eyes; sounds approach
 " the soul by the ear; and as the capacity
 " of feeling is diffused over the whole
 " sensitive frame, so tangible objects are ob-
 " vious to every part which is in contact
 " with them. Such likewise is the case with
 " my internal structure. By understanding,
 " I ascertain my ideas; by memory, I recol-
 " lect them; by imagination, I separate or
 " compound them; by reason, I compare
 " them, and examine their congruities or
 " diversities. But by what internal organ,
 " or what construction of organs, do I be-
 " come sensible of those reflex or secondary
 " perceptions, which have caused so much
 " speculation? If these objects were sub-
 " stantial and real in themselves, would not
 " the

“ the very impression of their existence like-
 “ wise inform me on what sense it was im-
 “ pressed? Surely this might give rise to
 “ some suspicion, that those ideas of beauty
 “ and propriety, which attend some characters
 “ and actions, are nothing but mere prejudi-
 “ ces favourable to human life, politically in-
 “ vented, wisely diffused, and zealously transf-
 “ ferred from father to son, for common ease
 “ and safety.”

THAT this conclusion, however false, is
 not unnatural, will appear from fact: for it
 is well known, that Mr Hobbs maintained a
 state of nature to be a state of war; and
 even in regular societies, where subordina-
 tion was established, offices ascertained, and
 laws enacted, he thought natural or artificial
 strength the only test of right and wrong ; or,
 in other words, power and right were the
 same. Thus the civil magistrate was only
 authorised to reward or punish; because to
 him the powers of the many, which that
 philosopher calls the *Leviathan*, are consign-
 ed, and by him collectively exerted.

If we still chuse to think this supposition too absurd for the result of natural and candid inquiry, let us consult Mr Locke's Essay on Human Understanding; where, by disproving that any practical principles can be innate, he in effect denies their reality. His acknowledgment that ethical maxims are not only true, but capable of demonstration, is a mere verbal concession, which all his arguments, both before and after, evidently tend to refute. His notions however are widely different from those of Cicero and the sages, from whom that philosopher imbibed his principles. For, according to them, there are some moral offices received by the mind as perfect, and ultimately eligible on their own account: this they termed *κατόρθωμα*, *perfectum*. It was only a class of duties subordinate to these, named *καθήκοντα*, *officia media*, for which they allowed that a probable reason could be rendered. From the *τὸ ἀγαθόν*, or *good*; from the *τὸ καλόν*, or *beautiful*; from the *τὸ πρεπόν*, or *decent*; which were in themselves supremely amiable; these philosophers estimated the genuine worth of characters and actions. Let us see how different from this is Mr Locke's opinion of morality:

morality: " I grant (says he) that the exist-
 " ence of God is so many ways manifested,
 " and the obedience we owe him so congru-
 " ous to the light of reason, that a great
 " part of mankind give testimony to the law
 " of nature. But yet I think it must be
 " allowed, that several moral rules may re-
 " ceive from mankind a very general appro-
 " bation, without either knowing or admit-
 " ting the true ground of morality; which
 " can only be the will and law of a God
 " who sees man in the dark, has in his
 " hands rewards and punishments, and
 " power enough to call to account the
 " proudest offender. For God having, by
 " an inseparable connection, joined virtue
 " and public happiness together, and made
 " the practice thereof necessary to the pre-
 " servation of society, and visibly beneficial
 " to all with whom the virtuous man has to
 " do; it is no wonder that every one should
 " not only allow, but recommend and mag-
 " nify, those rules to others, from whose ob-
 " servance of them he is sure to reap advan-
 " tage to himself." The same author, in
 another place, roundly asserts, that to ask
 the old philosophers why they thought vir-
 tue

tue self-rewarded, and eligible on its own account, was the same thing, as if we should demand of our cotemporaries, why some of them preferred apples, and others cheese: Whence it may be naturally inferred, that he thought all prepossessions for virtue, which were not derived from authority or utility, (the lowest motives to goodness in an heathen), were merely constitutional, and dependent on the difference of organization.

THE confusion and fallacy of his reasoning proceeded from the principles whence it was deduced. For he thought that those who contended for innate principles, supposed our nature, at its first production, possessed of every moral sentiment in their full force, and impressed with distinct notions of all the external circumstances in which these sentiments were designed to operate. Hence he maintained, that if practical principles were innate, they would be intuitive and universal. It ought however to be considered, that perceptions of the congruity or dissonance attending virtue or vice, are very different from the persuasion inspired by
self-

self-evident truths. A sentimental philosopher would tell him, not without reason, that moral principles are themselves intuitive, but their proper application demands reasoning and inquiry. Nor does their want of universality disprove their existence. For, as Mr Pope emphatically demands,

If black and white blend, soften, and unite
Ten thousand ways ; is there no black nor white ?

NEITHER let it be urged, that such intricacies as involve the foundation of virtue, have no connexion with its practice. For, in truth, whoever inquires into the foundation of moral perceptions, must, by the same act, explore the nature of those perceptions, and consequently the propriety of such actions as flow from them.

THUS we find the plainest dictates of natural religion, those which are most essential to the regulation of life and manners, “ puzzled in mazes, and perplexed with errors.” The revelation of JESUS, far from exploring the source of virtuous sentiments, presupposed their reality ; and its teachers
always

always appealed to these as pre-existent in the mind ; by which their hearers were capacitated to determine the propriety of those precepts which they inculcated. Such then is the difference between natural and revealed theology. The one, by searching into the nature of facts already established upon feeling and experience, obscures their very being, and debilitates their force ; the other, by assuming them as fixed and certain principles of action, restores their credibility, and corroborates their influence.

THAT the intricacies which have hitherto engaged our attention, both in theology and morals, are not the mere result of modern prejudices ; that they are no temporary complaints, occasioned by accidental circumstances, but coeval with reason itself ; the curious may be satisfied, by perusing Cicero *De finibus*, and *De natura Deorum*. So much then for the practical difficulties of natural religion. I believe we may fairly challenge sophistry and scepticism, with all their subtlety and malice, either to point out the same number, or condescend upon any one so formidable in the preceptive part
of

of the Christian scheme, which is not common to every theological system, deducing its origin and authority from one supremely powerful, wise, and good Being; or from the powers, relations, and circumstances of human nature.

SHOULD it be demanded, how beings, whose actions are predetermined, can be found accountable? we might refer the querist to the Stoics for solution, who were as absolute predestinarians as the most rigid Calvinist: nor is the Christian obliged to offer any other answer than what might be expected from a disciple of Xeno. It is essential to a being endued with the powers of reason and volition, that he should be determined by motives. Prepollent good, whether real or supposititious, must, by its very nature, command our choice, even independent of the divine decree. No predetermination of Heaven influences the will, otherwise than by the arrangement and application of motives. Thus all the faculties essential to our nature may operate with full freedom; and thus all the praise which it would have merited, all the blame which

it would have incurred in similar circumstances, antecedent to the divine decrees, will be found its just portion, as they are the genuine results of its conduct. Predestination, however, is not equally admitted by all sects of Christians. The determinations of God do not infallibly necessitate the bad to be happy, or the good to be miserable ; for, in the plan of providence, causes are no less necessary than effects, and he who is fated to misery, must incur it by guilt.

SHOULD it be objected, That the Christian precepts exact a perfection of which we are incapable ; let it be remembered, that every standard of moral rectitude which can be truly useful to a progressive agent, must be superior to his attainments at any given period. For should he reach or even approach it, his faculties cease to aspire, because they have either no more improvement to hope, or too little to excite his ambition. In the fine arts, the case is strictly parallel ; and we may be absolutely certain, that, if the most eminent masters had been as successful in their performances as their own ideas of perfection required, we never should have seen

seen the arts, of which they were enamoured, arrive at that degree of excellence, to which superior genius, and a happy concurrence of external circumstances, conducted them. Besides, if perfections unattainable by man are exacted, supernatural assistances are also promised. Frailty and weakness are favoured with all proper allowances; sincere intentions, and faithful, though imperfect obedience, are accepted.

ONCE more: If our adversaries should urge, that the injunctions of Christianity are harsh, if not impracticable, because they check the strongest impulses and warmest wishes of nature; let such reflect, that no violence is offered to nature in a refined and rectified state. Christianity eradicates no principles of action, inspired and approved by the Author of our nature; it only mortifies the redundancies, and restrains the luxuriance of innocent desire; whilst it extinguishes the fervour, and obliterates the stains of vice. But will any person contend, that vice is happy in its fruition, and prosperous in its issue, though Christianity had never been known? Surely the paths of

guilt, by an eternal and irreverfible neceffity, lead to perdition. Nor does the Almighty fave the criminal, without reforming the degeneracy. In a word, Chriftianity impofes no restraint upon our inclinations, but fuch as may qualify us to afcertain the value of objects, to weigh the confequences of things, and to preferve the native dignity and purity of the foul.

IT has been afferted, with fome degree of triumph, that neither our Saviour nor his apoftles inculcate friendship as a Chriftian duty. The original author of this objection did not perhaps intend that it fhould be ufed to the difadvantage of religion. In him it was no more than a farcaftic digreffion, to punifh the clerical fpite and arrogance which at that time were the plague and reproach of the Epifcopal church. But others of more ill-nature, and lefs penetration, took the hint, and propofed it as a formal argument againft Chriftianity; which fucceeding divines rendered ftill more important and formidable, by their answers. Thus when the feeds of difcord are kindled amongft coachmen and porters, if fuperior ranks fhould catch

catch the flame, and engage in the quarrel, the folly of the city immediately ferments; the war becomes general; peers and lacqueys, beaux and chimney-sweepers, grapple in the universal tumult, and all the chaos of human brutality roars. In effect, if example be more attractive than precept, the peculiar tenderness and intimacy which appears between JESUS and the beloved disciple, is a motive to friendship beyond the force of injunction.—It merits regard, that, in every moral institution, those virtues which appear to the mind with a particular lustre derived from their own free, generous, and voluntary nature, ought to be treated with superior tenderness and dignity; and will be more effectually diffused by persuasion and example, than enforced by authority. Amongst the more shining virtues, we may justly reckon friendship. It naturally arises from the constitution of a social creature; but the objects of its union, the degrees and permanency of its ardour, the vigour and seasons of its operation, are matters of free choice, and not to be determined by any authority, either human or divine. Hence its essential character is delicacy; and
 whatever

whatever constrains its liberty, exterminates its being.—Let us remark, with what Godlike benignity our Saviour recommends the spirit of universal charity to his followers. He does not assume the magisterial air, the voice of thunder, or the rod of iron, to threaten them with eternal fire and brimstone, as the punishment of misanthropy: “But again, (says he), a new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another as I have loved you; for so shall all men know that ye are my disciples.” When sentiments like these are enjoined, and selected as the characteristic of a religion; when, by sacred institution, benevolence takes full possession of the soul, can we imagine that friendship will not be amongst the favourites of her lovely retinue? On the contrary, is there not some danger, that a mind constantly inured to exertions and offices of tenderness, may concenter all its soft affections in one object, and thus not only lose the comprehensive pleasure arising from universal beneficence, but circumscribe that utility, which might have diffused its influence through distant periods and extensive nations, to one single individual?

IT

IT has likewise been said, that rewards and punishments are principles too fordid and illiberal to influence a moral agent. Virtue, according to these refined sages, must either be loved for her own charms, or not at all. The passion which she inspires is free, spontaneous, disinterested.—Alas! how little are these Gentlemen acquainted with common life? How little do they consider, that the croud of mankind, engaged in external pursuits, and attentive to the voice of exigence alone, are scarcely susceptible of that immaterial grace and beauty, which attracts the eyes of indolent contemplation upon regular affections, amiable dispositions, or propriety of action? If the labourer and mechanic have any inward determinations to virtue, without culture, without indulgence, without light, they can only operate in particular circumstances, by sudden fits; they extend not to all the virtues, but are only impulses directed upon some one. If they admire a character, its vices and infirmities are generally gilded and sanctified by its amiable qualities, in such a manner, that both are equally recommended to imitation. How far these faint impressions, these indistinct,

distinct, though lovely and necessary prejudices, can be principles of action ; whether they are vigorous and steady enough to regulate life and manners, to wield the human machine with sufficient energy and unerring rectitude ; let the philosopher judge. We forget that the very nature of a progressive being implies gradations. If the best and wisest of men have not, even to this moment, ascertained the absolute criterion of virtue and vice by all their researches ; how little reason have we to expect that the constant labourer, whose incessant toil for the subsistence of himself and his dependents scarcely permits him the necessary hours of relaxation, who never bestowed a thought on his own internal œconomy, should be very intelligent in the theory of morals ? Neither is it so practicable as the pensive sage may think, to initiate a mind, wholly engrossed by its own wants and inconveniencies, in the principles of disinterested virtue. The ligatures that bind human society, are too subtile for faculties immersed in sense and matter to perceive, unless the affections connected with them be sufficiently strong to force the mind out of itself,

itself, and extort its attention. And as the task of procuring and ascertaining private utility is found difficult, so much more reluctant will men appear to engage in any public cause. This is not mere conjecture, but hypothesis confirmed and supported by experience. It is therefore one of the wisest and kindest institutions of providence, that legislative authority should give sanction to the dictates of virtue; since the language of rewards and punishments will be universally understood, and uniform in its operations, when the mind is less sensible to those pleasing emotions which are inspired by regularity of character, refinement of dispositions, or propriety of conduct. *Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere Divos*, is a call so loud and striking, that it must controul the blindest instincts, and most violent propensities of the mind, till casual perceptions of internal beauty, and repeated experiments of the pernicious consequences attending vice, produce and confirm salutary habits. Then indeed will be the period, when virtue becomes eligible for her own sake, and when perfect love extinguishes all fear.

LOUDLY have the opponents of revelation exclaimed, that the Christian religion enervates the obligations of morality, by rejecting the claims of human merit, by exhibiting a full and perfect attonement for all crimes, and by denying that good works are essential to salvation. But though a Christian will not admit that man can merit any thing from his Creator, he is far from denying, that there are different degrees of worth and excellence in human characters. Nor does the righteousness of a Saviour imply any dispensation from the eternal and immutable obligations to virtue, but rather enhances their force, by shewing the dreadful effects of their violation, and by rendering the infinite love and grace of their divine Author more conspicuous. Nor is the necessity of good works, when considered as means of salvation, denied. But to suppose them conditions, by which God is obliged to bestow eternal life, is absurd even to reason and the light of nature. For where is the inviolable contract, either tacit or expressed, which can bind a lawgiver to render his subjects happy independent of their own conduct? And since none can urge the claim

claim of perfect rectitude, neither can any one plead his right to felicity acquired by good works. But as the acquisition and practice of any art are necessary to the accomplishment of its end; so are virtuous habits and dispositions necessary to the fruition of active, social, and contemplative good. Now if the happiness of heaven be suitable to the noblest faculties, the most refined and permanent affections of our nature, as at present constituted; if the torments of hell, as delineated in the Christian scheme, be directly opposite and disagreeable to them, then surely the cultivation of our active, rational, and social powers must be necessary to capacitate them for a happiness proper to their nature, and proportioned to their degrees of perfection. Thus, in ancient times, when public rewards were decreed for strength and agility, the athletic did not obtain his garland, merely as a token of fortuitous victory, but as a public declaration, that he actually possessed those qualities and acquisitions by which the conquest was gained. "What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: how shall we that

“ are dead to sin, live any longer there-
 “ in? Know ye not, that so many of us as
 “ were baptized into JESUS CHRIST, were
 “ baptized into his death? Therefore we
 “ are buried with him by baptism into
 “ death: that like as CHRIST was rai-
 “ fed up from the dead by the glory of the
 “ Father, even so we also should walk in
 “ newness of life.”

THAT passive disposition, that prompti-
 tude to forgive injuries, so warmly recom-
 mended by JESUS, and so faithfully observed
 by his earlier disciples, have been termed
pusillanimous, if not *impracticable*. Pride and
 resentment are frequently too fierce and
 impetuous for the deliberate counsels of pru-
 dence, or the gentle though persuasive dic-
 tates of religion and humanity. Nature,
 precipitant and vindictive in its present
 state of depravity, cannot separate the idea
 of glory from revenge, nor conceive victory,
 but in the misery or extirpation of its ene-
 mies.—These sentiments however differ no
 less from true magnanimity, and genuine
 heroism, than light from darkness. It is
 an infallible and constant lesson of expe-
 rience,

rience, that revengeful characters only render themselves more obvious to insult and provocation, as they are more frequently and conspicuously exerted. Sensibility to every slight affront, or casual injury, consumes the heart, and torments the soul with bitterness; it blasts every social disposition, interrupts the circulation of kind offices, kindles hell in the bosom before its time, and involves its votaries in premature damnation. It is besides justly interpreted as a declaration of war against the human species, oppressed with continual hostilities, branded with eternal and universal detestation. Cicero forbids all wrathful vindication of injuries, because it is impossible for anger to adapt or proportion punishments to crimes, and seems to wish these corrosive passions never exerted in the retaliation of wrongs. But having already declared my sentiments concerning those salutary prohibitions of our Saviour, which restrain the vindictive passions, I shall only refer the reader to those observations which he will find in a discourse concerning the obligation and degrees of benevolence.

IT

IT ought not to deduce from the value, nor to diminish the votaries of the Christian scheme, that its external rites are fewer, simpler, and more significant than those of any other institution under heaven. But in vindication of pure and divine truths, it must be observed, that the followers of JESUS are by no means answerable for the gross figments and legendary notions, which politics and superstition have introduced into faith and practice. It would be dishonest and unhandsome to reproach primitive Stoicism with that absurd and ridiculous apathy, so warmly inculcated by its modern sectaries. Nor can we impute to Epicurus that gross and boundless sensuality which was afterwards the darling tenet of his school. Whilst the soul of man, however immortal and independent in its nature, is clothed with material organs, it can only receive and communicate its ideas by sensible signs and impressions. The dispositions of the heart, and the principles of the understanding, are perceived by God, without the interposition of any medium. Yet there are certain exertions and attitudes occasioned in the soul by involuntary motion, when affected

ed with the consciousness of a presence so august and venerable, as the sovereign Creator and universal Mover of things. These external appearances, if expressive and natural, not only heighten and increase the ardour from whence they flow, but also excite similar feelings in every susceptible heart. Hence the origin of private and public devotion; hence the ardent gaze and elevated mein of celestial love; hence the dejected look and diffident air of penitence; hence the plaintive expostulations of tender grief, beneath the pressure of affliction; hence the pathetic importunities of painful indigence; hence the conscious blush, the disconcerted behaviour, of self-convicted guilt; and hence admiration lifts its hands and eyes to heaven, whilst starting fear, with broken accents, in short and abrupt ejaculations, deprecates impending calamity. These unpremeditated efforts of nature, in communicating her emotions to that supreme and invisible Being on whom she depends, are such convincing proofs of an original propensity to devotion, that all the ancient lawgivers considered divine worship as an essential part of their discipline.

AFTER

AETER vice and ignorance had disguised the simple and genuine charms of religion with external trappings, then was the idolatry of Egypt imported into Greece, and there re-modelled by priests and poets according to the genius of the country. Numa Pompilius, authorised by a pretended intercourse with Egeria goddess of health, whom, in the spirit of modern gallantry, she admitted to nocturnal assignations, digested all the superstitions of Etruria into a system; and abundantly supplied the Roman creed with fables, omens, and auguries, which were afterwards judiciously selected and transplanted into the catholic faith, for secular ends, by the infallible substitute of St Peter. But amongst all the Heathen or Christian mythologists, who established arbitrary modes of faith and discipline, some dangerous extreme was always adopted. Religion was either so wretchedly disfigured with apparatus and dress, that she could no longer be known; or so absolutely divested of all form and appearance, so refined and spiritualized, that she entirely excluded the gross apprehension of vulgar capacity. But the first of these errors being embraced

embraced with the greatest avidity by popular ignorance and superstition, and most effectually calculated to promote the ends of carnal policy, has ever obtained the warmest and most universal reception. To escape this danger, and yet impress incorporated minds with a sense of religion, the divine Wisdom found it necessary, whilst it rejected all unnatural and superfluous forms of devotion, to retain a few simple and expressive rites, by which might be signified the eternal and necessary dependence of man upon God; his various and indissoluble relations to his Creator, Lawgiver, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; the degenerate state of his powers, and the wonderful method of their restoration.

THESE considerations will afford us a natural and satisfactory account of such outward observances as are required by the best and wisest of all religions. Hence we are commanded, to read and understand the scriptures; to offer God the warmest wishes, and most exalted conceptions of the rational soul in praises; to pour forth all our hearts before him, in grateful acknowledgments of

O o

his

his favours ; to deprecate his wrath, and implore his mercy, in prayer ; to be publicly initiated in his visible church, by washing with water, in the name of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST ; a rite surprisingly emblematical of our natural depravity, as well as the necessity and efficacy of grace for our purification : and, lastly, hence we are enjoined to declare our acquiescence in the atonement of JESUS CHRIST, and our adherence to his doctrines, by socially partaking the symbols of his complete and perfect sacrifice. A full detail, and minute explication of all the practical difficulties in any religion, would be inconsistent with our present plan ; we only here attempt to show how impartial inquiry may be satisfied.

SECTION IV.

THUS far we have travelled a long journey, through paths interrupted by frightful obstacles, and perplexed with inextricable mazes, guided with ambiguous and defultory light, without perceiving where our wandering

wandering steps might find ultimate rest. But lo! the gloom is gradually dispelled; the whole horizon glows with a more vivid and diffusive splendour; objects before but dimly seen, resume their form and colour, and all the variegated scene of intellectual beauty and order shines displayed. Already we approach the celestial world; it is uncreated day! it is God himself, whose distant glory flashes on the soul with stronger and more enlivening effulgence, as she emerges from guilt and ignorance, and animates her progress to perfection.

WE have formerly proposed the difficulties which occur in natural religion; we have considered the evidences that recommend the Christian doctrine to our understandings; we have revolved the intricacies in which those dispensations are wrapt: from whence it appears, that the mysteries contained in the gospel are at least equally intelligible, and less numerous, than those which arise from the theology of unassisted reason. It remains to show, That the consolations derived from natural religion, are not only more clearly discovered and au-

thenticated by revelation; but others more glorious and sublime, which reason could never investigate, shine conspicuous in the evangelical dispensation.

IN the times of Greece and Rome, when philosophy shone in her meridian splendour, still the inexplicable posture of human affairs wrapt all her lustre in baneful and portentous darkness. Oft had the anxious sage beheld with sad suspense, and mute regard, the cruel insolence, the wanton and licentious triumphs of vice. Oft had he viewed with silent, yet with sorrowful astonishment, the fierce repulses, the fatal discomfitures of modest virtue. Wounded even to the depth of his soul with these incongruous appearances, he racked his mind to find their latent cause, with unavailing efforts. In one place, he might observe the patriot's wisdom and public zeal, vainly struggling with selfishness and luxury, to diffuse and establish their salutary schemes: in another, Partiality constituted by general suffrage the sole arbiters of merit, from whose determination there was no appeal. In one region, livid Pestilence tinged the burning atmosphere with

with death, invifible Deftruction stalked at large through the wide expanfe of heaven, and all the fluid element was impregnated with poifon; nor ftopped the dire Contagion to examine what dreadful confequences his havock might produce, but aimed his undifcriminating fhafts with equal rage at guilt or innocence: in another, Ambition fired the breasts of kings with wrath, or fanned the flames of intestine fedition. Hot from burning hell, grim Difcord iffued forth to open day, transfufing from bofom to bofom all the vengeance of her native abode. War, horrid War, the curfe of life, and reproach of nature, contracted his angry brow, fermented nations with his brazen voice, and flafhed deftruction from his rolling eyes, that never gaze with pleafure but on blood and carnage: before him, inexorable fury and precipitant revenge; behind him, all the kindred fentiments of nature, and all the focial virtues, attended with poverty, confufion, and defpair, pierced the vault of heaven with unavailing cries, and wept fuch tears as flow from irreverfible diftreffes. Here Virtue perifhed by the frown of defpotifm; there, led a victim to popular prejudice,

prejudice, she breathed her last, in cruel, yet protracted torments, pursued by insults and execrations, which she neither merited nor provoked. But though language could outstrip the career of time, and number all its moments by descriptions, in vain should we attempt the various and complicated ills, that, like insatiable harpies, riot on the comforts of public life.

WHEN the philosopher explored the calm domestic scene in hopes of consolation, how miserably was he still deceived? Alas! the little world is a mere epitome of the great. The seeds of mischief and misfortune are equally diffused through human nature. Infidelity, or diversity of interests, blasted every conjugal endearment. Faction breathed through families her venom, that mocked the force of antidote. Here parental tenderness mourned the premature destiny of its darling offspring: there widowed worth and beauty, incumbent over the tomb of all its happiness, deplores the eternal absence of its dearest good; nor feels a wish, but to mingle with its native dust.

AMIDST

AMIDST the conflict of elements, the discord of passions, the collision of interests, the dissonance of opinions, the wrecks of peace and order ; where can the attentive sage investigate the hand of a beneficent providence ? How does it appear that man is the care of superior Beings, whilst he becomes a prey to all the winds of heaven, to all the storms that agitate the sea, to all the forked lightnings of the sky ? Nor is he only destined to sustain the war of elements against him, however unequal to the mighty conflict ; the howling wood pours forth her hostile multitudes, and every sanguinary instinct burns to destroy him. But winds, and seas, and forked lightnings, and all the savage monsters of the desert, are mild and gentle enemies compared with man to man. Their violence is not directed by ill intention ; they do not torture with deliberate cruelty, nor explore the means of aggravating and protracting pain ; they plead no fraternal title to our confidence, that they may leave us disarmed and open to destruction. Man alone refines and improves on these detestable precedents ; it is his distinguishing prerogative to resemble, and even to emulate the spirits

rits beneath in their own execrable province.

IMPRESSED with such a sad, yet obvious spectacle of nature, will not the contemplative inquirer be tempted to entertain meditations like these:

“ FROM what source do I derive this conscious being? Who was it that placed me in my present circumstances? For what end have I been produced? I find myself no indifferent spectator of nature. There are some states and objects towards which I tend with indefatigable propensity, as to my supreme good; and others, from which I fly with inextinguishable aversion, as from ultimate evil. It is indeed certain, that I can only feel pain or pleasure from my own perceptions and ideas. But from this it will not follow, that happiness or misery are always in my power. For such is the connexion established by nature between my own existence and the objects which surround it, that some by their presence necessarily excite pleasing, and others painful sensations. These become sources
of

“ of desire or abhorrence according to their
 “ nature; and as the mind is variously af-
 “ fected by either of these situations, the
 “ state in which she then perceives herself
 “ likewise becomes either a subject of choice
 “ or rejection. It is not sufficient to say,
 “ that a number of these connexions, by
 “ which objects give me pain or pleasure,
 “ may be artificial, and owe their being to
 “ wrong associations of ideas, to false opi-
 “ nions, or to some other accidental cause.
 “ Still it must be allowed, that the greatest
 “ number of agreeable or disagreeable sensa-
 “ tions, are founded in the real nature of
 “ things. Nay even the artificial, or, if
 “ you please, the arbitrary sources of de-
 “ light and misery, of which you speak, are
 “ not without their causes, which, though
 “ mutable in themselves, and inconstant in
 “ their effects, are yet necessary in their in-
 “ fluence and operations on my mind, till
 “ their force be counteracted or destroyed
 “ by some superior efficient. I know that
 “ corporeal impressions vary in their degree
 “ of poignancy, according to the different
 “ states and habits of my organs; but from
 “ this it will by no means be conclusive,

" that they are either capable of change or
 " annihilation. Experience convinces me,
 " that, in myself, through all their most
 " extravagant varieties, they are fixed and
 " uniform. The intention of nature in
 " producing active beings, is an irrefraga-
 " ble argument, that she likewise designed
 " them to exert the powers of choice. And
 " what is choice, but the ultimate determi-
 " nation of my conscious and deliberative
 " faculties towards such things as are, or
 " seem agreeable? Since then I am a part
 " of a more extensive system, and by this
 " union ultimately concerned in its order
 " and welfare; can I possibly survey its re-
 " volutions with insensibility?

" IT is plain, that I myself, and every
 " thing around me, have relations and ten-
 " dencies beyond our own existence; and
 " do not terminate in ourselves, but in that
 " whole of which we are parts. It is like-
 " wise clear from intuitive and constant per-
 " ception, that there is something in me
 " which distinguishes me from every other
 " being, and constitutes me what I am. Nor
 " can I forbear to reason by analogy from
 " myself

“ myself to every thing else around me, and
 “ conclude, that as they are likewise indi-
 “ viduals, there must be some essential cause
 “ of their distinction. Can therefore parti-
 “ cular beings have their constituent princi-
 “ ples, whilst the whole system from which
 “ they flow, and in which they terminate,
 “ has none at all? Is there no universal
 “ Genius, no sacred Superintendant of na-
 “ ture, whose care and delight is to sustain,
 “ to nourish, to preserve her ample frame?

“ AGAIN: I feel that the principle, what-
 “ ever it is, by which I am preserved and
 “ animated, is necessarily determined to
 “ promote the good and order of that subor-
 “ dinate system over which it presides; and
 “ though obnoxious to error and mistake,
 “ yet never can be the designing or volunta-
 “ ry cause of its own evil. Must I not then,
 “ by parity of reason, transfer the same im-
 “ mutable principle of action to that Being,
 “ whose energy sustains and actuates, whose
 “ presence pervades and circumscribes,
 “ whose wisdom informs and regulates the
 “ whole? If so, then as, in the human in-
 “ dividual system, there is a communica-

“ tion or intelligence from every part to the
 “ whole, and reciprocally from the whole to
 “ its parts ; thus, in the great and univer-
 “ sal frame, it is natural to suppose that,
 “ from the same common interest, the same
 “ internal perceptions, the same inviolable
 “ sympathy, an intercourse of the same
 “ kind, should result.

“ TELL me then, thou almighty Artifi-
 “ cer, and wise Superintendant of the spa-
 “ cious all ! whence those irreconcilable
 “ appearances, that rapid succession of vicif-
 “ situdes, those eternal hostilities in nature ?
 “ Thou hast formed us with desires and ca-
 “ pacities of pleasure from things extrinsic
 “ to our being ; thou hast also expanded
 “ sources whence we may derive it. But
 “ why are not these treasures equally acces-
 “ sible to all thy intelligent offspring ? Why
 “ are some overwhelmed by their intempe-
 “ rate effusion ; whilst others, denied that
 “ happy exuberance, can neither force, nor
 “ importune one dear inestimable drop for
 “ the refreshment of lassitude and affliction ?
 “ why are they so uncertain in their ebbs
 “ and flows, that he who at this moment
 “ imbibes

“ imbibes the full collected stream, may be
 “ destined the next to pant and burn with
 “ inextinguishable thirst? Why should they
 “ fly from the lips of unassuming merit,
 “ whilst hardy and successful vice, inebri-
 “ ated with their swelling current, drinks e-
 “ ven to dull satiety?

“ If it be true, as some wise men have
 “ taught, that these inferior attachments
 “ are beneath the sublime destiny of our
 “ nature; if we are formed by thy divine
 “ hand to draw from living and perennial
 “ fountains eternal draughts of intellectual
 “ good; why are not those nobler and more
 “ extensive capacities sooner gratified? This
 “ might exalt the soul above her present
 “ aims, extinguish every gross desire, and
 “ raise her wishes from such fruitions as
 “ contaminate her powers, to objects refined
 “ as her nature, permanent as her exist-
 “ ence, diffusive as her conceptions, and
 “ adequate to her demands.

“ WE are thought progressive beings, to
 “ be trained for happiness by the discipline
 “ of prosperous or adverse occurrences. If
 “ then

“ then the universe be but one vast acade-
 “ my, for the perfection of its intelligent
 “ offspring, why are they so long confined
 “ in the rank of exoterics? why are they
 “ not for ever conducted by their smiling
 “ tutress, Pleasure, whose impulses might
 “ be sufficiently strong to dissipate all their
 “ mistakes, and conquer all their resistance,
 “ without the harsh restraint, the smarting
 “ correction of her stern and inflexible bro-
 “ ther, Pain?

“ AMIDST those frightful inequalities,
 “ those insolvable alternatives of good and
 “ evil, how shall reason labour to penetrate
 “ the gloom that involves it, and trace,
 “ through all the paths of nature, that uni-
 “ versal idea of beauty, order, and good,
 “ which ought to be the great, the original
 “ prototype of all her works? This philo-
 “ sophical anxiety for the fate of things,
 “ might, in some measure, be consoled, if,
 “ instead of faint presages and inconclusive
 “ arguments, we were blessed with the cer-
 “ tain conviction of immortal existence. It
 “ is indeed allowed, that consciousness, life,
 “ and motion, seem unaccountable from all
 “ the

“ the known principles of mechanism ; nor
 “ is it improbable that qualities so inherent
 “ in their subject, may exist in some indivi-
 “ sible essence. The progressive nature of
 “ the mind, whose capacities for ever en-
 “ large, and whose improvements are capa-
 “ ble of advancing without end, may doubt-
 “ less inspire the most agreeable anticipa-
 “ tions. But whilst I feel this living, mo-
 “ ving, voluntary principle within me passive
 “ to every external impression ; whilst expe-
 “ rience convinces me, that her most essen-
 “ tial powers and important operations may
 “ be suspended, and even appear annihilated ;
 “ how can I ascertain that independ-
 “ ence which seems to be the necessary pre-
 “ rogative of immortality ?—Alas ! how
 “ short, how evanescent, how replete with
 “ evils is human life ! To-day, we exist, we
 “ feel, we agitate ourselves and all around
 “ us ; to-morrow, we are extinct, and silent
 “ as the vast abyss, before the potent and
 “ omnific word called nature to being, if
 “ there ever was a time when things began
 “ to be.

ALMIGHTY

“ ALMIGHTY Mind! eternal Sovereign of
 “ the universe! whose intelligence I partici-
 “ pate, by whose power I am sustained,
 “ whose existence and attributes I investi-
 “ gate, whose impulses I seem to feel inces-
 “ santly prompting all my active powers to
 “ exert themselves for universal good; to
 “ what sacred light, what unexplored source,
 “ shall I fly for information? How shall I
 “ dissipate the gloomy uncertainty, whose
 “ incumbent horror depresses all my being,
 “ and leaves its brightest hopes, its noblest
 “ enterprises absorbed in endless and infinite
 “ despair? In vain am I told that, upon the
 “ mixture of the human character, depend
 “ the varieties of its fortune. Misery is in-
 “ deed the native consequence of vice; but
 “ why should vice take place in human na-
 “ ture? That error and mistake are the re-
 “ sult of limited powers, I can easily grant;
 “ but will it follow from thence, that unin-
 “ terrupted peace and tranquillity are incom-
 “ patible with finite existence? Is there no
 “ supposable state, in which a mind,
 “ though circumscribed in its powers, and
 “ confined to a particular sphere of action,
 “ may be free from misery?

“ GOD

“ GOD of nature! to whose eyes the
 “ depth of eternal wisdom, the numberless
 “ vicissitudes of infinite possibility are ob-
 “ vious! why am I, and all the fraternal race
 “ of men, born to the wretched inheritance
 “ of inexpiable guilt and immoveable wo?
 “ As images reflected by the polished sur-
 “ face of an opaque body, vanish in swift
 “ succession, without impressing any mark
 “ of their existence, and leave the open ex-
 “ panse unoccupied for others; so swiftly
 “ pass the fluctuating race of men, but not
 “ unheard nor unobserved. Departed vir-
 “ tue forsakes its friends and allies robbed
 “ of half themselves, dissolved in tears and
 “ anguish; whilst expiring guilt entails on
 “ its connexions the detestable heritage of
 “ shame and execration.

“ FATHER of the human spirit! amidst
 “ this general confusion of things, in which
 “ the beams of thy gracious countenance al-
 “ ternately sink in impenetrable darkness, or
 “ emerge in celestial glory to mortal eyes;
 “ still, still my soul persuades me, not only
 “ of thy existence, but of its infinite and in-
 “ separable perfections. For whence this

“ spark of reason, but from thee? What is
 “ every sense of order and beauty, but pro-
 “ pensties which find their objects finished
 “ in thy glorious nature? Who but thou
 “ couldst kindle and expand that restless wish
 “ which glows for universal felicity? Is
 “ then my soul interested in the happiness
 “ of all conscious and rational beings, and
 “ can I think her divine Author less generous,
 “ less benevolent, than she? Such are my
 “ views whilst every tempest in the natural
 “ or moral world subsides: But when vice,
 “ perturbation, or deformity, resume their
 “ province; once more my mind relapses in-
 “ to anxious doubt; again my fruitless ex-
 “ postulations rise to heaven.”

THESE are certainly the natural feelings,
 these the fluxes and refluxes of a philosophic
 spirit, unenlightened by the kind accession
 of evangelical truth. Let us then solicit
 comfort from her genuine abode, even the
 bosom of the Deity, propitiated to man by
 the merits and intercession of a dying Sa-
 viour.

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IT sufficiently appears from that melancholy suspense between hope and despair, in which we have found the disquisitions of human wisdom involved, that the existence of natural and moral evil is the sole, the essential cause of hesitation concerning the being and attributes of God, or the origin and end of human nature. Nor was it possible for reason to detect the latent connexion between the vices of men, and the disorders of the material world.

EXPERIENCE indeed had shown, that luxury is the parent of disease ; but, except this, the punishment of vice, seemed limited to the remorse which it inspired, and the reward of virtue to the internal satisfaction which it produced. For though reason was willing to suppose that rapid lightnings, impetuous tempests, and all the vindictive exertions of nature were instruments of divine justice for the chastisement of enormous guilt ; yet this conclusion, however natural, was not ratified by observation and experience, because innocence and virtue proved as frequently the victims of external accident as vice : nor were all these persons equally cri-

minal upon whom the tower of Siloam fell. Thus all the inward disorders, and all the external catastrophes to which human nature was subjected, appeared entirely inexplicable; nor could sages agree, from what origin they were deduced, or to what purposes they were applied.

PHILOSOPHY had indeed perceived a striking and evident difference between mind and matter. The latter was found entirely passive, and blindly actuated by impulse or attraction alone; the former moved by intrinsic energy, which could only be impelled or suspended by the interposition of moral or rational motives. Hence the idea of a free and voluntary agent, whose natural powers, uncircumscribed by outward restraints, left them, though not equally indifferent in their choice, yet equally capacious of good or evil. Upon this constitution, it appeared obvious, that all moral government must be founded. Nor was any violation of this liberty of choice compatible even with the essence of an accountable being. That free agents therefore, in some cases, might abuse their liberty, was a natural

ral supposition: but, from this possibility, it could never be presumed, that moral evil would universally prevail ; much less, that external pain and misery, under the administration of a wise and good providence, would be the undistinguished portion of all.

By revelation, however, we are taught, that the abuse of free and unconstrained choice was the source of evil. And as the whole human race was then united in two representatives, who rationally accepted the terms of happiness proposed by their Creator ; so their violation of that original covenant not only polluted and disarranged the constituent principles of their nature, but impressed the same hereditary stains on all their descendents, and subjected the whole progeny to those penalties which had been incurred by its first propagators. In consequence of this dreadful change, the Almighty Power, which had formerly established sacred order and harmony amongst the external elements, now, in some measure, impressed a permanent curse upon nature, that the effects of her discord might aid the internal functions of vice and virtue. For as
the

the empire of vice was now universal; so it became necessary that the sphere of punishment should be no less extensive. And though the influence of general laws, which, in every regular œconomy, must take place, might, in many particular cases, disproportion the degrees of vice and misery; yet the sufferings inflicted upon each delinquent, by turning his reflections upon himself, and upon that inward rectitude which alone could render being supportable, had a native tendency to his reformation. Thus the divine Spirit vindicates the ways of God to man. Thus we learn, that natural evil, far from being unnecessarily or wantonly inflicted, is a salubrious medicine for the disorders of the soul. —These consolatory views of God and nature ought to be still more highly esteemed, as they are not confined to the learned recess, nor discovered by long and abstract researches, but intelligible to every thinking being, and supported by such evidences as are within the reach of popular apprehension.

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THE ancient philosophers did not labour so much to discover the final, as the original cause of evil; for if they could determine whence it flowed, that discovery would considerably enlighten their opinions concerning its tendency. Through this labyrinth revelation conducts our inquiry with success never before attained; for it instructs us whence both natural and moral evil deduce their being and influence, in what manner they are connected one with another, and how the first becomes a happy instrument in correcting the last. If, then, you demand of a Christian, whence moral depravity? he will not hesitate to derive it from the perversion of freedom. If you ask him, whence pain and every natural distress or calamity? he will answer, that they are the result of divine appointment, as bitter potions to redress the disorders of the moral constitution.

CLEANTHES indeed, and others of the Stoics, had maintained the connexion between natural and moral evil. “Thou
 “bringest order out of confusion, (says that
 “poetical philosopher, in his hymn to the
 “supreme

“supreme Deity); and such things as are
 “disagreeable in themselves, become agree-
 “able under thy administration.” For
 though they deny the existence of evil, it is
 one of their favourite tenets, that the sinis-
 ter events of external nature are designed to
 cure and rectify moral disorders. Their
 manner of reasoning upon both these topics
 may be seen in Simplicius’s commentary up-
 on Epictetus. According to him, the great-
 est of natural evils is dissolution, which only
 restores things to their primitive state, and
 can therefore be no real evil: for as that
 portion of earth which composes our bodies,
 was insensible to all misfortunes before it as-
 sumed that form; so when resolved into
 its original dust, it is no longer capable of
 disagreeable feelings, and consequently no
 longer capacious of evil.

THE efficacy, however, of these argu-
 ments will not be sensibly felt by one who
 groans in excruciating anguish. Men may
 change the names of things, but their na-
 tures remain stubborn and inflexible. Pain will
 be the eternal antipathy of a sensitive being,
 notwithstanding the gentle appellations it
 may

may obtain from speculative men, when resolved to extort a particular conclusion, which reason and experience confront with all their force. We may perhaps be induced to suffer misery by the prospect of its agreeable consequences. These may balance, but not annihilate, the distress which precedes them. Painful or pleasing vicissitudes may give us a more exquisite relish for their contraries ; but neither of these can be a proper apology for the existence and prevalence of evil, much less can they destroy its essence, or change it into good. For still the insolvable question occurs, why is the course of things so determined, that good may be in any degree the effect of evil? why are we so constituted, that our sense of the one must be heightened by impressions of the other? If adversity be the minister of Heaven for the correction of vice, why is not guilt the sole aim of his envenomed shafts? why are they shot with equal rage at innocence and virtue? In a word, it is the Christian scheme alone which can reconcile phenomena so heterogeneous in themselves, so eternally and essentially opposite one to another, as good and

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evil,

evil, in the plan of a wise and benevolent administration.

BUT though we should grant, what the unenlightened sage gratuitously supposes, that natural evil is a course of chastisement for vice; yet let it be remembered, that moral evil is, in some measure, eternal and boundless in its consequences: for the actions of intellectual beings are no less necessarily connected by providence, than physical causes and effects. Thus an insult as necessarily provokes retaliation, as heat and moisture facilitate the growth of vegetables. Herbs may be prematurely nipped with frost, or blasted with lightening; resentment of injuries may be checked by conscious impotence, or impending danger; but the effects of both are equally certain and determined, when no superior cause interposes. Nor is vegetation a more natural product of warmth and humidity, than vengeance of hurt and injury. Thus moral evil has a native tendency to propagate and diffuse itself without end, and without limits. Nor is the same conclusion less obvious from its contagious and exemplary nature. One malevo-
lent

lent action not only produces another of the same kind; but the malignity spreads from heart to heart, and the spectator becomes too quickly enamoured of the mischiefs which he beholds, nor hesitates to mingle in the scene of horror. Thus neither from the human character in general, nor from the nature of the thing itself, can any bounds be assigned to its progress and duration.

THOUGH the beneficent administration of providence has, with admirable wisdom and benignity, suspended the career, and circumscribed the influence of evil; though its native propensity to extend and perpetuate its own empire is controuled by superior causes, and diverted from its original aim, to produce effects of a quite opposite nature; yet these consequences are neither deducible from the intention of the primitive agent, nor from the nature of the actions he performs, but from the happy and successful interpositions of a mightier Power, whose efforts are directed by consummate wisdom, and animated by infinite goodness. If therefore the native influence of evil be indefinite,

both in its progress and duration, it can be checked by no positive law, whose sanctions are not equal to all the dangers that can possibly arise from impunity. Thus we see, that the spirit of the divine laws, which promise eternal happiness to their observers, or threaten delinquents with endless misery, is inspired by the strictest equity, and consistent with the most tender mercy. Whatever motives may produce or regulate the procedure of individuals, we know that public transactions must be inspired and determined by public causes; so that, in the divine government, positive laws, armed and supported with external sanctions, are absolutely necessary. These rewards and forfeitures must by no means be arbitrary either in their extent or continuance, nor ought therefore to be debilitated by partial application; for these unhappy imperfections considerably frustrate the design of all human institutions, render their success doubtful, and prove the most fruitful sources of iniquity.

WITHOUT an adequate atonement, therefore, no sinner can possibly escape the hands,
or

or elude the awards of justice. But such a compensation can by no means be given, if the delinquent's capacities of suffering be limited, or his station and character of no higher importance than those of his brethren ; for the malignity of moral evil is too diffuse and permanent to be cured by any exemplary punishment, whose duration and extent are circumscribed. Even penitence itself cannot obliterate the evils which it deplores. Transgressions already past, and recorded in the books of heaven and fate, are not to be reversed by resolutions of future reformation. The purest virtue of which human nature is capable, extends not to the sanctity of those laws which are prescribed for its obedience. Our best actions demand the exertion of mercy and forgiveness ; how then can we atone for such as are bad ? Thus it appears, (as in another discourse we have more fully attempted to prove), that without an express and positive revelation from heaven, sinners have no reason to expect pardon.

It may therefore only be added on this subject, that if the laws of eternal and universal

versal government demand a sanction adequate to their own importance and dignity; if the nature of moral evil be to extend its influence, and protract its duration; if the continuance of the human soul be immortal, and its possibility of suffering be indefinite, surely no consolation can be more important or more welcome to a despairing criminal, than overtures of pardon and reconciliation. But for these we are indebted to Christianity alone; nor has reason the smallest authority, either from analogy, or the nature of things, to conclude, that God will be propitious to the guilty, unless her informations be derived from his own mouth.

THE powers of perception, of spontaneous motion, of conscience, and reflection; the progressive nature of the soul; the inextinguishable desire of existence, and horror of annihilation; the unequal distribution of good and evil in this œconomy of things; are indeed presumptive arguments for immortality, sufficient to inspire us with the most delightful hopes, and to influence our course of action. But these presages, however flattering and persuasive to the mind,
are

are far from producing that acquiescence, that serene satisfaction, which results from demonstrative proof. In the conversation of Socrates with his friends, immediately before he drank the poisoned bowl, though he urges all the arguments which we have now recapitulated, and others less cogent, he frequently discovers a sensible hesitation, and tells his disciples, that, if the proofs which he then offered should appear inconclusive, it would be necessary to explore others more valid and satisfactory. Cicero, in his Tusculan questions, *De contemptu mortis*, though he endeavours, with all the force of his genius, to assert the doctrine of immortality, yet declares himself its votary rather from the pleasure of its prospect, than the conviction of its arguments. In the first section of this treatise, we have endeavoured to shew, that the arguments arising from perception, from intrinsic motion, and from the operations of the mind, are too weak to bear the weight of a superstructure so immense as human immortality: and whatever conjectures may be derived from the superior nature and distinguishing faculties of the soul; yet perhaps they are not altogether
equal

equal to the force of this general axiom,
 “ That all things which have had a begin-
 “ ning, may likewise have an end; and that
 “ generation implies corruption.” Even the
 Stoics, who taught that the souls of men
 were τὰ ἀπόσπασματα, or parts separated from
 the divine essence, did not think them im-
 mortal; for which they are ingeniously ri-
 diculed by Cicero, who tells them, That
 “ since they allowed the mind to survive the
 “ body, it was no mighty sacrifice to com-
 “ pliment it with a longer duration than
 “ the life of a crow.” Many of the primi-
 tive fathers in the church explicitly main-
 tained the natural mortality of the soul,
 which, according to them, was only exempt
 from dissolution by baptism. And though
 perhaps some confused notions of its future
 existence might be implied in the funeral rites
 and deifications of early ages; yet before
 Fericides the Syrian, and Pythagoras of Sa-
 mos, the eternal existence of the soul was not
 admitted as a topic in philosophy. Thus
 from the nature of things, and the senti-
 ments of men, it appears, that all the indi-
 cations of human immortality were dark
 and ambiguous. With what joy therefore
 ought

ought we to receive the happy tidings, that
 “ God is not the God of the dead, but of
 “ the living ;” and that JESUS, when he
 died, only went “ to prepare a place for us,
 “ that where he is, there we might be
 “ also.”

IN all religions, and in every period of
 life, it was a general principle, that the
 wishes of men sincerely offered to the throne
 of God, if they were such as became rational
 creatures to indulge, or the supreme Disposer
 of nature to hear, ascended grateful to the
 skies, and found acceptance in the ear of
 Mercy. But it would perhaps be no easy
 matter to account for the universal establish-
 ment of this opinion. For when we con-
 template the character of God as an eternal
 and immutable Intelligence, it must appear,
 that he acts upon principles agreeable to his
 nature, and that the plan of his administra-
 tion is like himself, eternal, immutable, and
 uniform. Whatever therefore is conducive
 to the great ends of providence, will cer-
 tainly happen unsolicited ; and, on the con-
 trary, whatever tends to retard or frustrate
 its purposes, can never be accomplished,

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though implored with all the importunities of heaven and earth. Nor does the course of nature present any solution for these difficulties. The laws of her operation are not adapted to particular exigencies, but general in their ends, and universal in their influence. Gravitation, and all the mechanical powers of nature, admit no suspension, but from the interpositions of that Power by whom these biases were originally impressed on her frame. Such interpositions however appear improbable in themselves, and have accordingly been seldom or never observed : for if infinite wisdom hath established general laws, they are certainly calculated to accomplish all the ends which the sovereign Intellect proposed ; so that any exertion to suspend or retard their course would be subversive of their original intention, and contrary to the spirit of the divine government. Nor can we imagine that God will, at any period, counteract himself, or reverse with one hand what he has produced with the other. The tenor of human affairs perpetually suggests the same irresistible conclusion. The fixed and invariable relation between cause and effect is not to be

be separated by any accidental emergence of individual creatures, nor by any desires which they may breathe to Heaven, inspired by these peculiar situations. Besides, the wishes of men are as incompatible as their interests; and the gratification of one, is the necessary disappointment of another. Two armies in the field of battle will doubtless pray with equal ardour for decisive victory; but how can this be granted to both? Deeply impressed with the inviolable order of nature, and the intricacy of human affairs, the Athenian sage enjoined his pupil not to be too minute and particular in his petitions to Heaven, but confine his wishes to what was really good, and implicitly resign all other events to the wise and gracious determination of superior Intelligence.

FROM these views of the material world and the course of providence, though it may appear that the welfare and happiness of the whole is consulted, yet the weight and duration of particular calamities may still be dreadful. Man is often too weak to redress, and oftener too insensible to feel, the suffer-

ings of his fellow-creatures. Where then shall afflicted virtue and innocence explore a remedy for their distresses, if God and nature be deaf to the effusions of their sorrow? And yet, from all the conclusions of reason, what happier presages can they deduce? But he who, from eternity, knew the secret counsels of the divine bosom, gives us a very different account of things, and, with all the spirit of his Father's benignity, commands us "to ask, and we shall receive; to seek, and we shall find; to knock, and it shall be opened unto us." How grateful to the human soul is that sacred promise, that "whatsoever we shall request in his name, he will give us, that the Father may be glorified in the Son?" For if that insensible judge, who was neither actuated by fear of God nor man, had so much regard for his own quiet, as to gratify the incessant importunities of a suppliant widow, how much more will God, who is prompted by eternal and inherent goodness, listen to the just and natural desires of his people? Earthly parents, when their children ask bread, do not tantalize them with a stone; nor, when they crave a fish, mock their wishes with a serpent;

serpent ; nor, when an egg is necessary, insult the demands of nature with a scorpion. Do we therefore, inspired by the faithful instincts of nature, know to give good things to our offspring ; and shall the original Source of wisdom, beneficence, and happiness, be inexorable to the intreaties of his children ? See *An attempt to solve the objections against prayer*, in a discourse from Phillip. iv. 6.

THOSE limits which necessarily circumscribed the human being in its most exalted state, still left it infinitely beneath the incomprehensible glory and dignity of its supreme Creator. But when the stains of guilt were added to its native imperfection, with what success could it hope to interpose in its own favour with the offended Sovereign of heaven and earth ? To reunite these distant extremes, it was absolutely requisite that some person should be found, who, participating both the divine and human nature, might be qualified to represent the one, and render the other accessible. Hence, in the person of man, all the demands of God's law were satisfied, all the crimes of human nature atoned, and all the pernicious consequences
of

of its apostacy removed. Nor are we alone purified from guilt by that " blood of " sprinkling, which cleanseth from all sin ;" but have likewise an Advocate with the Father, whose unwearied and efficacious intercession assiduously importunes his goodness to forgive our iniquities, to sanctify our natures, to promote our happiness, and to save our souls. As this glorious Person is invested with the administration of human affairs, he is fully impowered to make all the incidents of providence, all the outward means and internal operations of grace, effectual instruments of our present improvement and future happiness ; so fruitful of substantial comfort is the word of God delivered by JESUS CHRIST.

EXPERIENCE will demonstrate, how ignorant we are of our duty, and how reluctant to perform it when discovered. The convictions of reason are too cool and uninteresting, to impress the mind with steady principles of action. Even precepts and injunctions, however authoris'd, have no force sufficient to command our obedience, to enlighten the darkness of our understandings,
to

to controul the perversity of our inclinations, to rouse and stimulate our consciences. All the lessons of experience, and all the means of human instruction, are frequently impotent. It were therefore greatly to be wished, that the goodness of God would interpose for our relief upon such occasions, to dissipate the shades of ignorance, to quench the flames of impetuous appetite, to excite and animate our progress in virtue, and to deter us from vice, by proper views of its native deformity and dreadful consequences. Hence, in the remotest climes and most barbarous ages, a notion of intuitive communication with Heaven universally prevailed. But the strange ceremonies by which these divine emanations were sought, the legendary facts which supported their credit, the various and inconsistent opinions which were propagated by their pretended authority, and, above all, the absurd and immoral lives of those who boasted of such extraordinary gifts, were more than sufficient to refute the confidence with which they were entertained. One nation alone, confined in a distant corner of the world, unknown to the rest of mankind, or despised by them, could
produce

produce such credentials as were proper to establish a principle so generally believed, and so weakly supported every where else. Dejected therefore with such gloomy reflections, as the absence of the Deity from the human mind must naturally inspire, how could the pious heart, involved in any dilemma of conduct, or oppressed with unforeseen calamity, forbear to exclaim in anguish, “ My God, my
“ God ! why hast thou forsaken me ? ”

AMIDST the horrors of intellectual darkness and moral depravity, which seemed to extend their baneful and portentous shade over all the visible works of the Creator, how comfortable and welcome must it have been to every soul that was conscious of its weakness, and tenacious of its duty, to learn, that the intercession of JESUS would be employed in procuring from the Father another PARACLETE, whose intimate presence should irradiate the minds, inspire the tongues, and regulate the conduct of all who sincerely implored his assistance ? By this divine Παρηγορία, this *heavenly Presence*, the mind is enlightened and animated in its progress, consoled and supported in its afflictions, informed
and

and determined in its difficulties. And though the silent, yet emphatic intimations of this internal monitor, are now of a more private and limited nature ; though they do not, as in ages past, transport the soul in visions of futurity, but co-operate with the natural powers of man, in a way more agreeable to themselves ; still however the Christian may feel and bless their sacred influence ; still he may hear the gentle, yet intelligible, whispers of celestial wisdom, transfusing courage through his heart in every danger, illuminating his understanding in every doubt, and suppressing the agitations of his spirit in every adverse occurrence. Numerous and sublime are the panegyrics which philosophy bestows on the mind of man ; but that the living God himself should prefer the human bosom, when pure and holy, to every other temple, was a discovery reserved for him, “ who spake as never man spake.”

AMONGST all the religions dictated by nature, which admitted the doctrine of immortality, none seems to have assigned the soul such tasks, nor promised such enjoyments, as were suitable to the extent of her capacity, e-

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qual

qual to the dignity of her powers, and adapted to the purity of her essence. The heathen Elysium was capricious and fanciful; the Mahometan paradise, gross and sensative. The claims of unassisted reason to future happiness are extremely modest and humble. All the heaven which the mere philosopher can, with any degree of probability, anticipate, is the free and natural use of his social and rational powers exempted from pain and uneasiness. But how far does this idea sink beneath the glory and happiness which Christianity promises its votaries in the world to come? If beyond the present life we look for social felicity, where can a nobler society be found, than
 “ the general assembly and church of the
 “ first-born which are written in heaven; an
 “ innumerable company of angels; the spirits of just men made perfect; JESUS the
 “ mediator of the new covenant, and God
 “ the judge of all!” If we are enamoured of rational enjoyments, what entertainment can be more sublime, than to contemplate intelligence and truth in their original fountain, to study the plan in which they operate, and to admire the various forms which
 they

they assume ! If eternal and absolute immunity from pain, sorrow, danger, and death, delight us ; what prospect can be more agreeable to those who navigate their way through the various tempests of this tumultuous and fluctuating life, than the harbour of profound and endless repose, which Christianity proposes to our hopes ! In this consummation of rational existence and beatitude, every desire of the soul shall be satisfied to its full extent, and every faculty exerted in its utmost perfection ; whilst, in everlasting progress, the human being rises to more distinguished heights of improvement and happiness.—But in vain should we attempt to describe things which are unutterable and incomprehensible. The height, the depth, the length, and breadth of these immense possessions, are only known to that infinite Liberality who bestowed them.

WHEN the beneficent purposes of virtue are frustrated by oppressive injustice, when detraction endeavours to involve her amiable lustre in darkness, she naturally anticipates a period, when her efforts will prove more successful, and her reputation be freed from

the malignity of unjust censure. But these agreeable prefages are rather the effect of our wishes, than of our conclusions; as they are neither supported by any induction of reason, nor favoured by any analogy in the course of things. The few instances in which merit is properly rewarded, or vindictive justice asserts its authority, too rarely occur, and are of too little importance to remove all difficulties, and firmly establish the principle of universal retribution. So various are the successes of vice and virtue both in public and private life, so different from their natural tendencies are the issues of actions, so precarious is the tenor of human events, that reason has no fixed, no invariable *data*, from whence to deduce the restoration of universal order and harmony in the works of God. For if, in any period of the divine government, virtue be depressed, and vice triumphant, why may not other periods, and other instances, produce the same unhappy catastrophes? or what grounds has the disappointed inquirer to imagine, that any future circumrotation of things shall place them in a better or happier state? It is therefore from the word of God alone
that

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that we can derive ultimate satisfaction in these intricate researches. Hence only we can be informed with certainty, that there is an important æra to come, when the righteous Judge of all the earth will render to every man according to his deeds ; “ to them who
“ by patient continuance in well-doing, seek
“ for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey
“ unrighteousness: indignation, and wrath ;
“ tribulation and anguish upon every soul
“ of man that doth evil, of the Jew first,
“ and also of the Gentile. But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the
“ Gentile. For there is no respect of persons
“ with God.”

THUS, according to our primary intention, we have attempted to prove, that the consolations derived from natural theology are confirmed by revealed religion; and that the doctrines of JESUS have opened other sources of comfort, which philosophy could never explore. It remains that we conclude
with

with a few natural and obvious improvements from the whole *.

SECTION

* SINCE the plan of this work was laid, and in a great measure executed, the design of the following reflections has been anticipated by a much more masterly hand. That gentleman has discovered, with so much energy and simplicity, with so much warmth and moderation, how the soul of man may derive comfort from religion, that, had the last discourse of his *Comparative View* been presented to me before I digested the ensuing reflections, I should have referred the reader to that elegant and beautiful essay, as a more faithful interpreter of my sentiments than I myself could have proved. The whole performance is calculated to refine and dignify human nature, by enumerating the various advantages of its animal, rational, and moral frame, and by shewing how these may be most effectually cultivated and improved, for producing the highest utility and entertainment to their possessors. But how is all his soul warmed and elevated; how are the noblest feelings of his heart awaked; how does his genius rise even above itself, when he inculcates religion as a fruitful source of felicity and consolation to the mind! These observations would need no other apology, if I should acknowledge, that they were intended as a just tribute of gratitude to the most exquisite talents effectually exerted for the best and most salutary purposes; but to this apology I have no claim, since I candidly own, that my motive was not to compliment the Author, but recommend the Essay.

SECTION V.

NOTHING more clearly discovers the impassible limits which are assigned to human understanding, than when it explores the being and perfections of God, or the wisdom and extent of his works. How partial and contracted are the views of truth and nature, of which our faculties are capacious in this immature and progressive state! Our intellectual light may be clear enough to discover the existence and reality of such grand objects ; but it is too faint and ambiguous to contemplate their qualities and relations, or to discern their symmetry and proportion. Hence all the doubts and difficulties which perplex our investigations of the divine existence, character, and government. Some truths, in their very nature, are incomprehensible to reason, and must be conveyed to the mind by other channels of discovery than mere observation and inquiry. These considerations ought justly to mortify the pride and arrogance of false wisdom ; they ought

ought to dispose the mind for reviewing its own attainments, with a modest, humble, and diffident eye. Cautious of fixing principles, jealous of external appearances, open to rational conviction, she ought to survey herself, and every thing around her, with views of acquisition and improvement.

BUT are these the maxims; is this the procedure of modern infidelity? Are not her pupils dark in their conceptions, prejudiced in their inquiries, limited in their views, and precipitate in their conclusions? These are the sole obstacles, whose malignant interposition can blind the soul, and render her insensible to the lustre of evangelical discoveries. Infected with a spiritual calenture, they behold nothing in its genuine colours; but are tempted, by false and illusive prospects, to pursue their own perdition. For since the existence and attributes of God, the great motives that influenced him in creating the world, the plan of his procedure with his rational creatures, the laws of his moral government, the degeneracy and alienation of human nature, the pardon of sin
and

and restoration of man by JESUS CHRIST, the communion with God, and the salutary interpositions of his Spirit upon earth, the intricacies of providence, the general judgment, the certainty of eternal retribution, and the complete re-establishment of order and happiness, are placed in a light so advantageous by the Christian dispensation; can we esteem those minds to be less than infatuated who pertinaciously resist the united force of rational evidence?

IT is acknowledged, that we cannot deduce from principles *a priori* the essential facts which are contained in the history of Christianity. But it is equally true, that these occurrences are conveyed to the human mind, and impressed on its faculties by the only medium through which they could pass, which is the testimony of competent, faithful, and disinterested witnesses. It is also certain, that the gospel contains inexplicable mysteries; but such as are neither inconsistent with reason, nor contradictory in themselves. Besides, the difficulties which occur from reason are more numerous and formidable than they.—Let us therefore,
U u with

with humble hearts, and docile understandings, receive and imbibe that wisdom of God descending “from above, which is first pure, “then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intrusted, full of mercy and good fruits, “without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

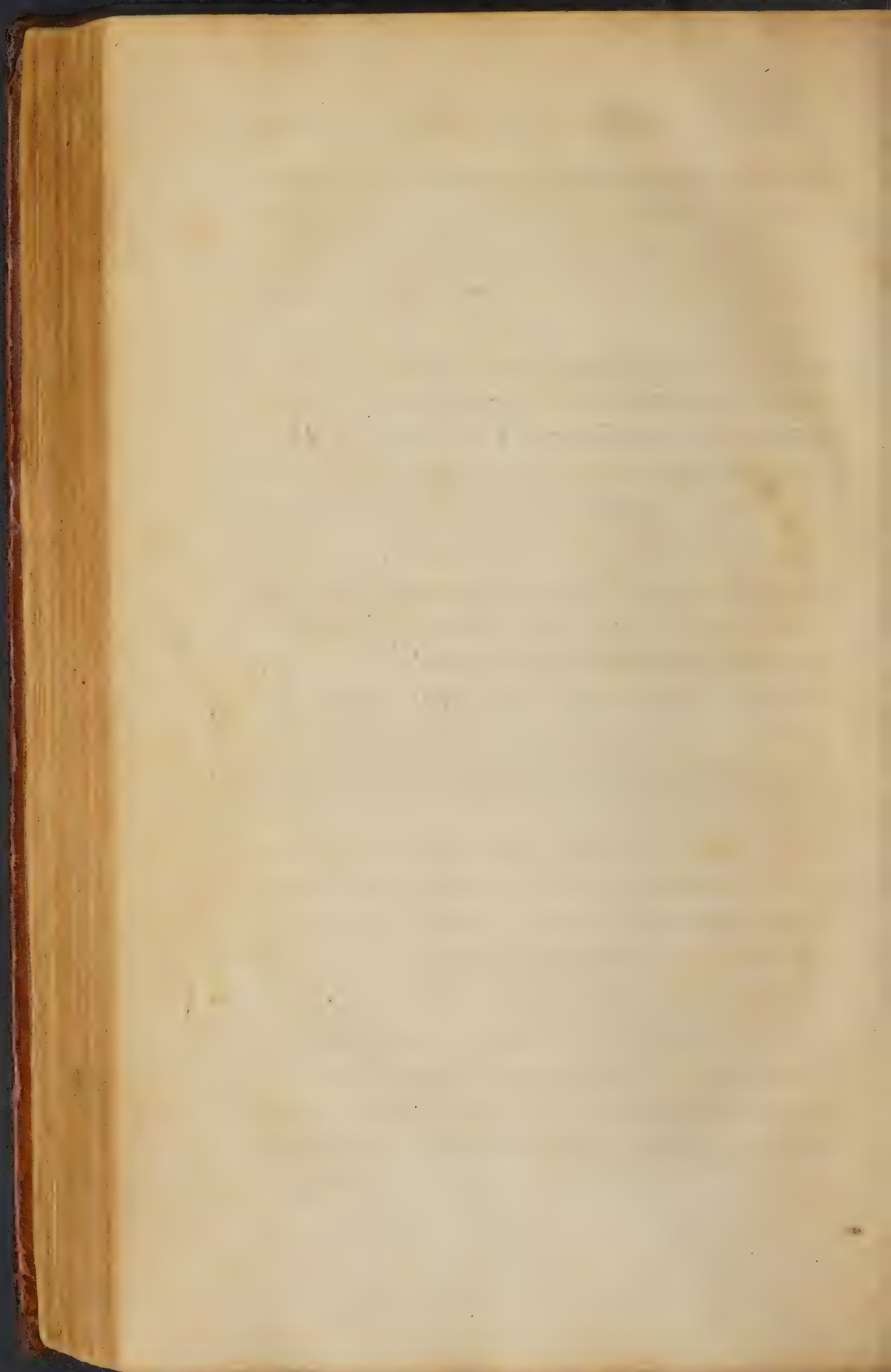
FROM our former researches it appears, that our attachment to happiness is coexistent with our being; nor can we divest ourselves of the one more than of the other. Since therefore the few enjoyments of our present state are unsatisfactory in their nature, and precarious in their duration; since all the efforts of reason to extend her prospect, or discover more substantial and permanent good, can yield us little more than favourable conjectures; is there any thing more agreeable in nature, or more consistent with reason, than to improve those lights which confirm and elevate our hopes? Whilst we remain susceptible of happiness and misery, whilst the first is only partially enjoyed, whilst her visits are so unfrequent, and their continuance so momentary, in vain would Philosophy pretend to secure the heart from

from trouble by all the consolations which she can dictate. It is not in mere speculations, nor inactive theories, that human felicity must consist. Happiness is a successful and habitual exertion of mind in the pursuit or enjoyment of its proper good. What then is the proper good of the mind, but the contemplation and attainment of perfection? and where can perfection be found, but in that eternal and infinite Mind, which is its original source and ultimate consummation? It is in communion with him alone that a conscious and rational creature can be blessed. Without this, all its miseries are real and essential bitterness, all its joys illusive and chimerical. But if the Christian religion, which alone bears the signatures of its divine original, be fictitious, then even the existence of a powerful, wise, and gracious Superintendant in nature becomes a subject of dismal hesitation. The attributes of his essence, the spirit and rules of his conduct, the ends of his government, and the laws intended for the regulation of its subjects, are covered with immoveable obscurity. All this gloom is at once dissipated by the celestial radiance of

the gospel; which shining at first with a mild and gentle lustre, gradually diffuses its splendour, till all the intellectual horizon flames with uncreated day.

“WHY, then, art thou cast down, O my
 “soul? and why art thou disquieted within
 “me? hope thou in the Lord, for I shall
 “yet praise him, who is the health of my
 “countenance, and my God.” No more
 shall my heart be troubled: for as, by the
 works of nature, I am taught to believe in the
 existence of one supreme Creator and Dispo-
 ser of all; so, by the discoveries of grace, I
 am taught to put my trust in one Mediator,
 who shall restore virtue, peace, and order,
 through the universal kingdom of God.

A
L E T T E R
T O A
F R I E N D.



A
L E T T E R
T O A
F R I E N D,

Concerning some Points contained in
the Last DISSERTATION.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER having read the Consolation
which I have attempted to deduce
from Revealed Religion, which, with that
of Cicero, and my remarks on both, I sub-
mitted to your review, you still seem to ima-
gine, that it is possible for human wisdom,
without any supernatural assistance, to inves-
tigate and establish a system of natural the-
ology, not only satisfactory in itself, but
armed

armed with sufficient energy to regulate the conduct of mankind: such a system, you say, may be found in the ancient philosophers, which, though not complete in any one, may at least be collected from the whole. But, allowing your assertion to be true, is such a system calculated for vulgar capacity, or for the exigencies of common life? Can the peasant or mechanic either find leisure or opportunity, though assisted with all the lights of philosophy, to deduce for himself such a series of principles as are sufficient in every case to inform his doubts, to regulate his passions, and to direct his behaviour? To me, however, it appears no great difficulty to prove, that your position is not true; and that so far were the philosophers from exhibiting a refined, consistent, and evident system of natural theology, that the superior lights and advantages which they possessed, had no other effect than to involve them in deeper and more impenetrable darkness: for though “from the visible things
“ which God has made, the invisible things
“ of him, even his eternal power and god-
“ head, may be clearly discernible;” yet that investigation requires a mind predisposed

posed to acquiesce in a discovery founded on sufficient evidence, without protracting its inquiries, or exploring such mysteries of the divine nature as to us are inscrutable.

THE indications of a divine Artificer and Superintendant, which result from the frame of the natural and moral world, are obvious and striking: profound and abstract researches can serve no other purpose, but to confound or efface the pleasing and salutary impressions of wisdom and goodness, which we receive from our first view of the constitution of things. Thus, “after that, “in the wisdom of God, the world by “wisdom knew not God, it pleased God “by the foolishness of preaching to save “them that believe.” But to ascertain this fact beyond all hesitation, if you will admit the authority of Cicero, I shall translate a few passages from the introduction to his treatise on the nature of the Gods, and from the speech of Velleius, with which the dialogue is opened.

You will not, I hope, fly to that common and unmeaning subterfuge, that Cicero was

a follower of the new academics, and in that character was not at liberty to decide. Yet, at the same time, his probability was no less convincing than the certainty of other sects. Experience indeed will shew us, that the same principles may be attended with different degrees of conviction, as inquirers are differently predisposed to receive them, or influenced by the arguments employed to support them. Yet it must be granted, that when any tenet admits of hesitation, when any reasonable objection can be offered against it, an academic may fairly maintain his ground, and affirm, that perhaps we may approach to certainty, but never can reach it. Cicero, therefore, had good reason to say, That in disquisitions concerning the nature of the Gods, it was much easier to perceive what was false, than what was true. The most superficial initiate in metaphysics will easily discover, that there is a necessary and inseparable connection between the natural and moral attributes of God; and that, without precise and determined ideas of the former, it is impossible to conceive how the latter can subsist. Unless, for instance, we believe the spirituality, indivisibility, and ubiquity

ubiquity of the divine Nature, his power must be circumscribed, his wisdom successive and partial, his goodness limited in its operations. When therefore it appears, what idea the philosophers entertained concerning the physical constitution of the Deity, (if you will allow me the expression), we shall see upon what foundation all their fine reflections concerning his character and government proceeded.

IT must be confessed, that a number of these reflections are admirable in themselves; but they rather flow from traditionary hints, and the dictates of a good heart, than from rational deduction. This your candour will allow me, when you have examined what chimerical notions the most enlightened sages of antiquity entertained concerning the form, situation, and employment of their Deity, as delineated by Velleius. It is not sufficient to urge, that, as an Epicurean, his account must be disingenuous; because it was taken from manuscripts then extant, and publicly known. Besides, had it not been given with candour, there were great men of every capital sect in philosophy present,

who must have vindicated their leaders, and refuted the false assertions of their antagonists. But though we should suppose, that such an interview never happened, and that the dialogue written by Cicero is entirely imaginary; yet the ancients, in this manner of writing, never could pardon the smallest deviation from the truth of characters, nor the least violation of probability. It was therefore the indispensable duty of Cicero, in the character of Balbus and Cotta, to have represented them as clearing the philosophers, under whose standards they arranged themselves, from every false imputation; and which, as being an academic himself, he would have taken care to have done.

THESE are his own words, in his address to Marcus Brutus :

“ As there are many things in philosophy
“ which remain till now by no means sufficiently illustrated; so, Brutus, it is a fact
“ of which you cannot be ignorant, that
“ an inquiry concerning the nature of the
“ Gods is involved in great difficulty and
“ obscurity: Yet the knowledge of this is
“ not

“ not only one of the greatest ornaments of
“ the human mind, but absolutely necessary
“ for the regulation of religion. Concern-
“ ing this the opinions of the most learn-
“ ed men are so various, and even so incon-
“ sistent, that from thence we may deduce
“ a conclusive argument, that the only *data*,
“ the true principle upon which philosophy
“ can proceed, is that intuitive knowledge
“ which excludes all hesitation; and that, with
“ great wisdom, the academics restrain their
“ assent from such conclusions as were ob-
“ noxious to uncertainty: For what is so
“ culpable as rashness of judgment? or what
“ so precipitant, so much beneath the dig-
“ nity and gravity of a wise man, as either
“ to think falsely, or to defend, without the
“ least hesitation, such opinions as have
“ neither been examined nor established with
“ sufficient accuracy and deliberation? Thus,
“ in the present question, the greatest number
“ of philosophers have acknowledged, what
“ is in itself extremely probable, and what,
“ by the impulse of nature, we are strongly
“ inclined to believe, I mean, the existence
“ of the Gods. Of this, however, Prota-
“ goras doubted; Diagoras of Melos, and
Theodorus

“ Theodorus of Cyrene, absolutely denied it.
“ Those, however, who acknowledge that
“ there are Gods, have adopted notions so
“ different and inconsistent, that it would be
“ troublesome to recapitulate their opinions.
“ For much has been said concerning the
“ form, the situation, the abode, and the
“ employment of these Divinities; and on
“ these topics philosophers dispute with the
“ greatest warmth, and most irreconcilable
“ inconsistency. But the grand, the essen-
“ tial inquiry is, Whether they are totally
“ inactive, without attempting or perform-
“ ing any thing? whether they are entirely
“ detached from the care and administration
“ of nature? or, on the contrary, whether
“ things were not originally formed and
“ disposed by them? and whether the world,
“ during its whole indefinite existence, is
“ not moved by their power, and superin-
“ tended by their wisdom? Upon the first
“ of these subjects, the discord is still wider,
“ and less capable of accommodation: yet
“ unless this is properly decided, men must,
“ by necessary consequence, be ignorant of
“ the most important truths, and entangled
“ in the mazes of inextricable error. For
“ there

“ there are at present, and have formerly
“ been, philosophers who affirmed, that the
“ Gods were entirely unconcerned in hu-
“ man affairs. If their opinion be true,
“ what must become of piety, of religion,
“ and of every thing sacred? For all these
“ sentiments and acts of devotion can only
“ be offered to the Divinity from a pure
“ and sincere heart; because we presuppose
“ that they are the objects of his attention,
“ and that from him proceed gifts and ad-
“ vantages of importance to the human race.
“ But if the Gods are neither able nor wil-
“ ling to assist us; if they survey us with
“ unmoved indifference, nor are at all con-
“ cerned in what we do; if they administer
“ nothing comfortable, nothing useful to
“ human life; what reason can be assigned,
“ why we should offer them the tribute of
“ worship, of praise, or of prayer? For
“ the other virtues exhibited by men may
“ be counterfeited by pretence and dissimu-
“ lation: but the essence of piety is to be
“ sincere; which, if destroyed, must of con-
“ sequence annihilate religion, and all that
“ is holy in life; and, by removing these,
“ you introduce boundless anarchy and con-
“ fusion

“ fusion into the world. Nay, if you ex-
“ tinguish piety towards the Gods, I am
“ uncertain whether you would not extir-
“ pate all fidelity in human intercourse,
“ break the most sacred bands of society,
“ and banish from the world justice itself,
“ though the most excellent of the virtues.
“ There are, however, other philosophers,
“ and these too of excellent genius and dis-
“ tinguished name, who think the whole
“ world is governed and administered by the
“ will and direction of the Gods: nor this
“ alone, but likewise that the life of man is
“ under their tuition; that they consult its
“ interest, and provide for its exigencies. For
“ it is their opinion, that the immortal Gods
“ bestow upon the human kind both grain
“ and every other necessary of life which the
“ earth produces, with all the blessings which
“ result from the seasons, from the vicissi-
“ tudes of time, and from the revolutions
“ of the heavenly bodies, whose happy in-
“ fluence brings all the productions of the
“ earth to proper maturity. These sages have
“ collected many observations which are
“ contained in this dialogue, which are so
“ striking, that one would imagine the im-
“ mortal

“ mortal Gods had framed the objects from
“ whence they are drawn, solely for the use
“ and accommodation of man. Against
“ those Carneades advanced so many strong
“ arguments, that by these, men of no in-
“ active genius were excited with an ardent
“ desire of exploring the truth. For there
“ is no question in which the opinions not
“ only of the vulgar, but even of the learn-
“ ed are so widely different: whose senti-
“ ments, as they are so various, and so pal-
“ pably inconsistent among themselves; on
“ one hand, it is possible that all of them
“ may be false; on the other, it is impossi-
“ ble that more than one can be true.”

THUS much from Cicero's introduction.
Whence it appears, by his own authority,
that the question concerning the nature and
existence of the Gods was embroiled in end-
less difficulty; and that, in general, this
important point remained still undetermi-
ned, whether they were concerned in human
affairs; or, on the contrary, whether they
passed an eternity in that tranquil indolence
described by Lucretius:

Omnis enim per se Divûm natura necesse est,
 Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,
 Semota ab nostris rebus, sejunctaque longè ;
 Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
 Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
 Nec benè promeritis capitur, nec tangitur irâ.

We shall therefore immediately proceed to the speech of Velleius, where the various opinions mentioned by Cicero are enumerated in detail.

“ Listen, says he, not to such foolish and
 “ fictitious reveries, as that the God descri-
 “ bed by Plato, in his Timæus, was the pro-
 “ jector and artificer of nature; or the old
 “ prophetic female, by the Stoics called
 “ Πρόνοια, which may be translated *Provi-*
 “ *dence*; or a world animated and endued
 “ with the powers of thought and sensation,
 “ a God whose figure is round, whose ap-
 “ pearance splendid, and who is whirled in
 “ one eternal eddy: these are the monstrous
 “ brood of superstition and blind astonish-
 “ ment; the dreams, not the disquisitions
 “ of philosophy. For with what eyes could
 “ your favourite Plato survey the complex
 “ and laboured structure of things, or de-
 “ duce the plan upon which he says that
 “ his

“ his God has formed and disposed the
“ whole? What mighty efforts, what me-
“ chanical instruments, what pullies and
“ levers did he use? Who were his ministers
“ in a toil so immense and prodigious? In
“ what manner could these unruly elements,
“ the air, fire, and water, be reduced to o-
“ bedience, and rendered obsequious to the
“ will of an architect? From whence pro-
“ ceeded these five forms, of which all the
“ others are constituted, and which of them-
“ selves so natively tend to generate a mind,
“ and produce the powers of sensation? Long
“ is the journey, and perplexed the road to
“ those retired truths, which are of such a
“ nature, as rather to be the objects of our
“ wishes, than of our discovery. But this
“ notion is indeed extraordinary, that he
“ who had affirmed the world to be produ-
“ ced in time, and almost formed with
“ hands, should again tell us, that its exist-
“ ence is eternal. Do you think such a person
“ can be pronounced even a novice in na-
“ tural philosophy, who imagines that any
“ thing which had a beginning can possibly
“ subsist without end? For what aggregate
“ is not capable of dissolution? or what ob-

ject can be found which is acknowledged
to have an origin, without any boundary
in which it terminates? But if you, Lucilius, patronize that *Πρόνοια*, or *Providence*, the same objections may be urged against this as formerly: What were her machines? who her ministers? who drew the entire plan of the world upon which she operated? and what was her apparatus? But if we must suppose another Creatress, why did she form the world capable of dissolution? why not, like the God of Plato, create it eternal? From both I would gladly demand, why these world-builders appeared so late? why they passed numberless ages before in an inactive lethargy? For prior to the formation of the world, ages still subsisted. I do not here mean those portions of duration which are measured by the succession of days and nights, in their annual returns; for I grant that these could not be accomplished without the revolutions of the heavenly bodies: Yet there was from infinite duration something which we call *eternity*, which was not measured, as now we measure time, by periods.

“ periods. What sort of continuity this
“ might have been, or what its extent, we
“ cannot possibly comprehend ; for that
“ time should at once be existent and non-
“ existent, is inconceivable. During this
“ immense space, however, I ask you, Bal-
“ bus, why your *Providence* remained in
“ total inaction ? Did the Lady feel herself
“ reluctant to toil ? A sense of fatigue from
“ labour is incompatible with the divine
“ nature ; nor was there any fatigue to be
“ undergone, since the whole extent of nature,
“ the heavens, the earth, the seas, would
“ spontaneously obey the will of the Deity.
“ But what could inspire this Divinity with
“ so strong an inclination to adorn the
“ world, like an ædile*, with torches and
“ flambeaux ? Was it that the place of his
“ residence might be better and more com-
“ modious ; yet for a whole eternity before
“ that time he had contentedly lodged in
“ darkness, as in a gloomy cell ? After this,
“ can we imagine him amused by that va-
“ riety with which the heavens and the
“ earth are adorned ? what entertainment

* The Roman ædile superintended the police of the city.

“ can

“ can this be to God? or, if it could, why
“ was he so long without it? Did God, as
“ you most frequently say, create things in
“ this manner for the use of man? Of
“ whom, pray? of the wise and good? How
“ few then can reap the pleasure and advantage of a work so complex and laborious?
“ Was then creative power exerted for the
“ foolish and profligate? But, in the first
“ place, there can be no reason assigned why
“ God should endeavour to deserve well of
“ the wicked: Further, what end has he
“ obtained, since the foolish and the bad
“ must, by these qualities, be rendered consummately miserable; for what more
“ fruitful sources of misery can we conceive
“ than vice and folly? Besides, there are
“ so many inconveniencies in life, that the
“ wise must sooth the uneasiness which they
“ feel, by balancing its advantages in the
“ contrary scale; but fools can neither avoid future, nor bear present misfortunes.

“ HOWEVER, those who have said that
“ the world was animated, and possessed the
“ powers of intelligence, have by no means
“ understood

“ understood the nature of mind, nor in
“ what form it can subsist. Of this never-
“ theless, I shall say more afterwards. In
“ the mean time, I must be astonished at
“ the dulness of those who chuse to call it
“ endued with spirit, immortal, supremely
“ happy, and round in its figure, because
“ Plato denies that any form can be more
“ agreeable than this. For my own part, I
“ should think a cylinder, a square, a cone,
“ or a pyramid more beautiful. But how
“ is this spherical Deity supposed to pass
“ his time? in whirling round with such
“ prodigious swiftness as exceeds imagina-
“ tion? A motion in which I do not perceive
“ how a tranquil intelligence, or a happy
“ being can subsist. And why should not
“ the same thing which, when felt in the
“ least degree by our corporeal frame, gives
“ us uneasiness, be likewise uneasy and dis-
“ agreeable to this God? Now, since the
“ earth is a part of the universe, it must
“ likewise be a part of the Deity: but we
“ see vast regions of the earth uninhabitable
“ and uncultivated; because some of them
“ are scorched by the near approach of the
“ sun, others stiffened with frost and snow,
“ by

“ by its great distance. And since the uni-
“ verse is God, as these are parts of the u-
“ niverse, we must say, that some members
“ of the Deity are burning hot, others be-
“ numbed with cold.

“ THESE, Lucilius, are the sentiments of
“ your sect: what those of the other philo-
“ sophers are, we shall see, by tracing them
“ from the earliest of the ancients. For
“ Thales the Milesian, who first inquired in-
“ to these subjects, thought water the first
“ principle of things, and God the intelli-
“ gence which formed every thing from
“ that element. If the Gods can exist with-
“ out the powers of thought and sensation,
“ why unite them with water? If, on the
“ contrary, mind can subsist without body,
“ why suppose any thing corporeal necessa-
“ ry to it? It was the opinion of Anaxi-
“ mander, that Gods were generated, emer-
“ ging to existence, and departing from it,
“ by long intervals; and that there were
“ innumerable worlds. But how can we
“ conceive a God whose existence is not
“ from eternity to eternity? After him A-
“ naximenes asserted the air to be God; that
“ he

“ he was produced ; that he was infinite,
“ immense, and in perpetual motion : as if
“ air, without any determined figure, could
“ be God ; since God, in particular, ought
“ not only to have some form, but even the
“ most beautiful : or as if any thing which
“ could be generated, was not likewise ob-
“ noxious to corruption. Then Anaxago-
“ ras, who received his doctrine from Ana-
“ ximenes, first determined that the whole
“ plan, and all the revolutions of things,
“ were designed and accomplished by the
“ power and counsels of an infinite Mind.
“ In this he did not perceive, that no
“ motion * can subsist in any infinite subject,
“ intimately connected with sense ; and that
“ no sensation could be felt by such a sub-
“ ject, which was not at the same instant
“ impressed on all the parts of nature.
“ Moreover, if he thought that this mind
“ was a kind of animal. there must be some
“ internal principle, some essence, which
“ constitutes it what it is ; but what princi-
“ ple can be more essential, more internal,

* Sensation seems to presuppose corporeal organs, which can neither be infinite, nor exert a power of infinite motion.

“ than mind itself? Let us therefore clothe
“ it in corporeal and external organs. But
“ if this supposition be disagreeable, a pure
“ and unimbodied intelligence, not joined
“ with any medium by which sensible per-
“ ception can be conveyed, to me appears
“ inconceivable, even by the highest efforts
“ of understanding. But Alcmaeon the Cro-
“ tonean, who ascribed divinity to the sun,
“ the moon, and other stars, as well as to
“ the mind, did not consider, that he in-
“ vested things, mortal in their own na-
“ ture, with immortality. Pythagoras too,
“ who imagined, that a soul was mixed with,
“ and diffused through the whole mass of
“ things, from which human intelligences
“ were extracted, did not reflect that, by
“ the extraction of these intelligences, his
“ God must be dilacerated, and torn in
“ pieces; and that when such intelligences
“ were affected with misery, which the
“ greatest number of them must at some
“ time feel, then a part of the divine mind
“ must be miserable, which cannot possibly
“ happen. But why should the soul of man
“ be ignorant of any thing, if it be a God?
“ or how should that God, if he be nothing
“ but

“ but an universal mind, be connected or
 “ mixed with the universe? Likewise Xe-
 “ nophanes, who imagined that, joined with
 “ a mind, every thing else to which infi-
 “ nity could be attributed, was God, may
 “ be refuted by the same arguments with
 “ other philosophers who unite their corpo-
 “ real divinity with intelligence; but on
 “ him they fall with still greater weight,
 “ as he supposes the whole to be infinite, in
 “ which nothing capable of sensation or ac-
 “ cession can subsist. Parmenides invented a
 “ sort of extraordinary figment, in the form
 “ of a crown or garland, which he called
 “ *στέφανον*, circumscribing the universe with
 “ a blaze of light, which surrounds the hea-
 “ vens, and which he terms God; but in
 “ this no mortal can trace either the form or
 “ sensibility which are suitable to the divine
 “ nature. The same extravagant philoso-
 “ pher likewise deifies a thousand mon-
 “ strous chimeras, such as War, Discord,
 “ Desire, and other phantoms of the same
 “ kind, which are obliterated by disease,
 “ by sleep, by forgetfulness, or even by
 “ a long course of time. The same refuta-
 “ tions which we applied to others who a-

“ scribe godhead even to the constellations,
“ though they are likewise against him,
“ shall not be recapitulated. As for Empe-
“ docles, whose mistakes in other things are
“ egregious and frequent, in his notions of
“ the Gods his error is shameful and pal-
“ pable. For he thinks the four elements, of
“ which, according to him, all things sub-
“ sist, are Gods: but that these are capable
“ of production and annihilation, that they
“ are void of all consciousness, we may clear-
“ ly perceive. Nor does Protagoras seem to
“ have formed any idea of the divine nature,
“ who tells us, that concerning the Gods he
“ knows nothing distinct or certain, whe-
“ ther they exist or not, nor what sort of be-
“ ings they are. What shall we say of De-
“ mocrites, who attributes divinity to the
“ images of objects which strike us, to that
“ nature from whence these images proceed,
“ and to that knowledge, that improvement
“ of understanding which we derive from
“ them? are not these tenets involved in
“ endless error? As the same philosopher
“ absolutely denies that any thing can be e-
“ ternal, since nothing remains fixed in any
“ one state, does he not by this means en-
“ tirely

“ tirely extirpate his divinity, so that all his
 “ former opinions are rendered void? What
 “ of the air, which by Diogenes the Apol-
 “ lonian is acknowledged to be God? What
 “ consciousness, or what forms does it pos-
 “ sess? from whence we can ascertain its di-
 “ vinity? It would be tedious to enumerate
 “ the inconsistencies of Plato, who, in his
 “ *Timæus*, tells us, that the Father of this
 “ world cannot be named; in his books
 “ concerning laws, thinks we ought by no
 “ means to inquire what God is. His as-
 “ sertion, that God can be without a body,
 “ or, as the Greeks say†, incorporeal, is
 “ quite unintelligible: for such a God must
 “ necessarily be without sensation, without
 “ wisdom, without agreeable perceptions, all
 “ which are included in the notion of God-
 “ head. The same person says, both in his *Ti-
 mæus* and in his *Laws*, that the world is a
 “ God, and the heavens, and the stars, and the
 “ earth, and human minds, and those whom
 “ we receive as such by the institutions of our
 “ ancestors; which in themselves are plainly
 “ false and inconsistent one with another. And

† Ἀσώματος.

“ likewise

likewise Xenophon is guilty almost of the same errors, but in fewer words: for in these conversations of Socrates, which he repeats, that philosopher is represented asserting, that the form of God is not an object of our inquiry ; afterwards as calling the sun and the human mind Divinities ; and sometimes acknowledging one, sometimes more Gods ; which are almost the same errors just mentioned in Plato. Antisthenes too, in his treatise on natural philosophy, admits a number of Gods worshipped by the populace, yet acknowledges only one true Deity in nature, and, by thus dividing the Godhead, destroys the power and simplicity of its essence. Nor is Speusippus much different ; affirming, that there is a certain force by which all things are governed, and that this is an animal. In this manner, he endeavours to eradicate from the mind all knowledge of the Gods. Aristotle, in his third book of philosophy, gives his sentiments with no less confusion, but faithfully follows his master Plato : for sometimes he attributes all the powers of divinity to mind ; sometimes he calls the world

“ a

“ a God ; sometimes he speaks of another
“ superintendant, to whom he assigns the
“ office of preserving and governing the
“ world by a certain revolving motion. A-
“ gain, he calls the splendour of heaven a
“ God ; not reflecting that heaven is a part
“ of the universe, which in another place he
“ styles a God. But how can the heavens,
“ carried on with such rapidity, retain that
“ serene consciousness which we attribute to
“ the Deity. Where then shall we find ha-
“ bitations for such a number of Gods, if
“ heaven be one? But since the same philo-
“ sopher deprives his God of a body, he
“ must likewise rob him of all sensation and
“ wisdom. Besides, by what means can he
“ move the world, since he wants a body?
“ or how preserve his own tranquillity and
“ happiness, since he himself is in continual
“ rotation? Nor was his fellow-pupil Xeno-
“ crates more enlightened on this subject :
“ for he has assigned no figure to the Gods,
“ in his books wrote concerning their na-
“ ture ; but contented himself with inform-
“ ing us, that they are eight in number.
“ Five of these he assigns to the planets ; one
“ he collects from all the fixed stars : as if
“ the

“ the simplicity of a divine essence could
“ subsist in so many scattered members. He
“ adds the sun as a seventh; and the moon
“ completes the number. But in what sense
“ these may be called happy, no mortal can
“ understand. Heraclides of Pontus, from the
“ same Platonic school, has filled his books
“ with childish fables: yet at one time he
“ thinks the world, at another the mind a
“ Divinity. He likewise attributes divinity
“ to the planets, denies that God is consci-
“ ous, and thinks his form changeable. A-
“ gain, in the same book, he enumerates the
“ earth and heavens amongst the Gods.
“ Nor is the inconstancy of Theophrastus
“ supportable; for at one time he attributes
“ divine sovereignty to the mind, at an-
“ other to heaven, and again to the constel-
“ lations and planets. Nor can we listen
“ with patience to his pupil Strato, who is
“ called the *Physiologist*; who thinks the
“ whole power of the Godhead is placed in
“ nature, which contains the causes of pro-
“ duction, augmentation, and diminution,
“ but is void of all form and consciousness.
“ But Zeno (for now, Balbus, I come to the
“ sect which you acknowledge) thought the
“ law

“ law of nature divine, and that it possessed
“ a power of enjoining what was just and
“ proper, and forbidding their contraries.
“ But how he endues this law with body
“ and spirit, we cannot understand; yet we
“ certainly allow that God is an animated
“ being. And the same philosopher, in another
“ place, calls the æther God; if that
“ can be conceived a God, which feels nothing,
“ which never is propitious to us,
“ neither for prayers, nor supplications, nor
“ vows. Elsewhere he tells us, that there
“ is a certain reason diffused through all
“ nature, which he thinks invested with all
“ the powers of divinity. The same compliment
“ he pays to the stars, to months,
“ to years, and their revolutions: For when
“ he interprets the Theogony of Hesiod, he
“ totally denies all the received and established
“ notions of the Gods: nor will he
“ admit amongst the number of the Gods,
“ either Jupiter, Juno, Vesta, or any to
“ whom these designations may be given;
“ but thinks these appellations bestowed upon
“ certain mute and inanimate things by
“ a sort of allusion. His disciple Aristo is
“ no less erroneous in his opinion, who nei-

“ ther thinks the form of the Gods can be
“ understood, nor allows them to be con-
“ scious; nay, he is extremely doubtful
“ whether God is a living being or not.
“ Cleanthes †, who attended the lessons of
“ Zeno at the same time with him I last
“ named, not only says that the world is a
“ God, but gives the same denomination to
“ the soul and intelligence of all nature; and
“ he judges that effulgence, which we call
“ *æther*, which is the highest, the last, every
“ where circumfused, the most remote, sur-
“ rounding and embracing all things, un-
“ questionably a Divinity. The same au-
“ thor, as if affected with a delirium, in
“ those books which he wrote against plea-
“ sure, in one place imagines a kind of form
“ and appearance belonging to the Gods;
“ in another, ascribes all divinity to the
“ stars; lastly, thinks nothing more divine
“ than intelligence. Thus it happens, that
“ the God whom we recognise in our own
“ minds, and whom we would preserve in

† The poetical hymn of this philosopher to Jupiter is quoted in the Consolation; and, if we change the names, might be esteemed almost truly evangelical.

“ the idea of our understanding, which is
 “ the impresson of his nature, no where
 “ appears. But Perseus, a disciple of the
 “ same Zeno, tells us, that those were e-
 “ steemed Gods by whom any arts and in-
 “ struments of great importance to human
 “ life were invented, and that such things
 “ as are useful or salutary, were called by
 “ the names of Gods; so that, in his opinion,
 “ they are not the inventions of the Deities,
 “ but themselves divine. Now, what can
 “ be more absurd than to dignify with di-
 “ vine honours such things as are base
 “ and deformed ; or to deify men long ago
 “ removed by death, who could no other
 “ way be worshipped with propriety, unless
 “ in groans and tears? But later than these,
 “ Chrysippus, who is reckoned the most sub-
 “ tile interpreter of the Stoical visions, col-
 “ lects an immense multitude of unknown
 “ Gods; and indeed so totally unknown,
 “ that we can form no notion of them, even
 “ by conjecture, though it seems possible
 “ for the human mind to conceive every
 “ thing; for he says, that the divine power
 “ consists in reason, and in that soul and
 “ intelligence which animates universal na-

“ ture. He likewise calls the world and
“ its intelligence, which, according to him,
“ is universally diffused, each a God: a-
“ gain, that dominion which it exercises
“ by virtue of consciousness and reason,
“ and that principle which is common
“ to the nature of things, comprehend-
“ ing the universal whole: again, that sha-
“ dowy being named *Destiny*, and the ne-
“ cessity of certain effects from their pecu-
“ liar causes: besides these, fire and æther,
“ which I have just before mentioned: more-
“ over, both such things as were by their
“ nature fluid, and in perpetual agitation,
“ as water, earth, air; the sun, the moon,
“ the stars, and the universal aggregate of
“ things, in which are included all the parts
“ of nature; and likewise those men who
“ had attained immortality. The same per-
“ son maintains, that the æther is he whom
“ men call Jupiter; and that air, which is
“ extended and mixed with the sea, Nep-
“ tune; the earth, Ceres. In the same man-
“ ner, he explains the names of the other
“ Gods. This very writer calls the force of
“ the eternal and immutable law, which is
“ as it were the guide of life, and the source
“ of duty, Jupiter; the same thing he calls
“ too

“ too fatal necessity, and the eternal truth
“ of things to come : Of all which there is
“ nothing which seems to comprehend the
“ idea of divinity. This account he has
“ given in his first book concerning the na-
“ ture of the Gods ; in the second, he la-
“ bours to accommodate the fables of Or-
“ pheus, Musæus, Hesiod, and Homer, to
“ the descriptions which he has given of
“ the immortal Gods in the former : so that
“ the most ancient poets, who never dreamed
“ of such a thing, might appear Stoics.
“ Him Diogenes the Babylonian follow-
“ ing, in that book which is entitled *Miner-*
“ *va*, transferring the birth of Jove and
“ the origin of the virgin Goddess to natu-
“ ral philosophy, metamorphoses the story
“ from a fable to an allegory. Thus far I
“ have laid before you, what may be rather
“ called the dreams of madmen, than the o-
“ pinions of philosophers.”

VELLEIUS then proceeds to the fictions of
the poets, the Magi, and the Egyptians,
that from thence he may take an opportuni-
ty to introduce a panegyric on his master.
But, after all, the sentiments of Epicurus were
not

not less absurd than any of the former ; for he only acknowledged the Gods, that he might be free from the imputation of atheism ; a character then unpopular and odious. His Gods were neither concerned in the formation nor government of nature ; their form was human, because they must have had some figure, and none could be more beautiful: yet they had no blood, but something like blood ; no body, but something like one.

SUCH, my dear Sir, was the state of philosophical theology from the earliest records of learning to the times of Cicero. Eternally embarrassed with matter and motion, the labouring mind could neither, by its utmost efforts, form an idea of the Deity abstracted from these, nor suppose them united with him. It was a bold assertion to pronounce him incorporeal ; because it seemed then unaccountable by what means he formed and regulated this complex frame of things. Besides, how could an immaterial existence be supposed capable of sensation, without these mediums that convey such perceptions to our minds ? The other alternative was
not

not more eligible; for a material Divinity must, by its very nature, be discernible and circumscribed, since all bodies within our knowledge have dimensions. An infinite mind united with matter, as the human soul with the body, must, from that conjunction, be susceptible of pleasing or painful impressions, and consequently passive in the same degree. This was the cause why Epicurus and his followers, who seemed to have placed their supreme good in the absence of pain and uneasiness, established their Divinities in a calm recess, widely distant from us and our affairs. Even those who had some dark and perplexed ideas of an immaterial being, seemed to have expressed their sense of the matter with much timidity and confusion. It will, I think, be acknowledged, that Greece and Rome were the most enlightened nations in the world; that they were not only indefatigable in pursuit of discoveries by the exertions of their own understanding, but anxious in their industry to collect whatever might facilitate their improvement from others. In that distinguished period when Cicero resigned himself wholly to retirement and philosophy, the world had probably

probably subsisted four thousand years. Now, since during that immense series of time, the wisest of men had obtained no juster notions of God and religion, what presumptive argument can be urged, that in any future period their inquiries would have been more successful? Or though, in complaisance to the antagonists of Christianity, we should suppose an event, which universal experience from the birth of time contradicts; yet how could these distinguished sages propagate and establish their opinions in such a manner, as to become powerful and universal principles of action? In effect, there never was nor ever will be found a religion invented and established by philosophy. The modes of faith and worship which, till the Christian æra, obtained credit in the Gentile world, were either the result of tradition, accident, superstition, or sacerdotal policy. Whence else could they proceed? Since these noble enthusiasts in favour of nature, who so warmly asserted the beauty of her frame, the wisdom and munificence of her laws, when severely pressed with the evils and disorders of human life, were forced to make the most graceful

graceful retreat in their power, by urging suppositions for arguments, and conjecture for demonstration. Of all the sages who imbibed this spirit of philosophical gallantry, it seems to glow with the most intense warmth and brightest lustre in Plato amongst the ancients, and in Shaftesbury amongst the moderns. And how have these inamoratos attempted to diffuse their passion, and recommend their goddesses to our affections? If we objected against any particular evil, their answer was prepared; "Pray, gentlemen, be contented; learn to make a virtue of necessity: If you were freed from the present inconveniency, a thousand others more grievous and insupportable must follow. Besides, you are no more than a part of your own subordinate system, and that itself is but an inconsiderable part of the spacious universe. When this dawn, this infancy of your progressive being is over, golden times, halcyon days shall succeed." But Theocles and his master have made no new discovery, when they inform us, that the removal of one evil may be productive of greater and more numerous distresses than that which we deplore. Still

we ask, why things were so constituted as to render this miserable alternative necessary? That there is a subordination of beings and interests in this world, and that particular must yield to general good, I grant; but what hostile principle in nature produced this unhappy competition? Why might not all beings enjoy equal independence and felicity? Supposing, however, that the vestiges of a connexion, formed by the subordination of parts, could be traced through the whole planetary system, what authority have I to carry the same idea beyond it? Analogy will no longer conduct my wandering steps: its light was indeed ambiguous and uncertain whilst it remained, but now all is darkness and solitude; fancy and hypothesis must supply the rest. But with these weak and irresolute auxiliaries, how shall I maintain my ground against Voltaire's Optimist and Micro-Megas? I tremble for the catastrophe. It would be tedious and unnecessary to recapitulate my expostulations with such philosophers as attempt to prove human immortality without the assistance of revelation. These you have already seen in the foregoing treatise.

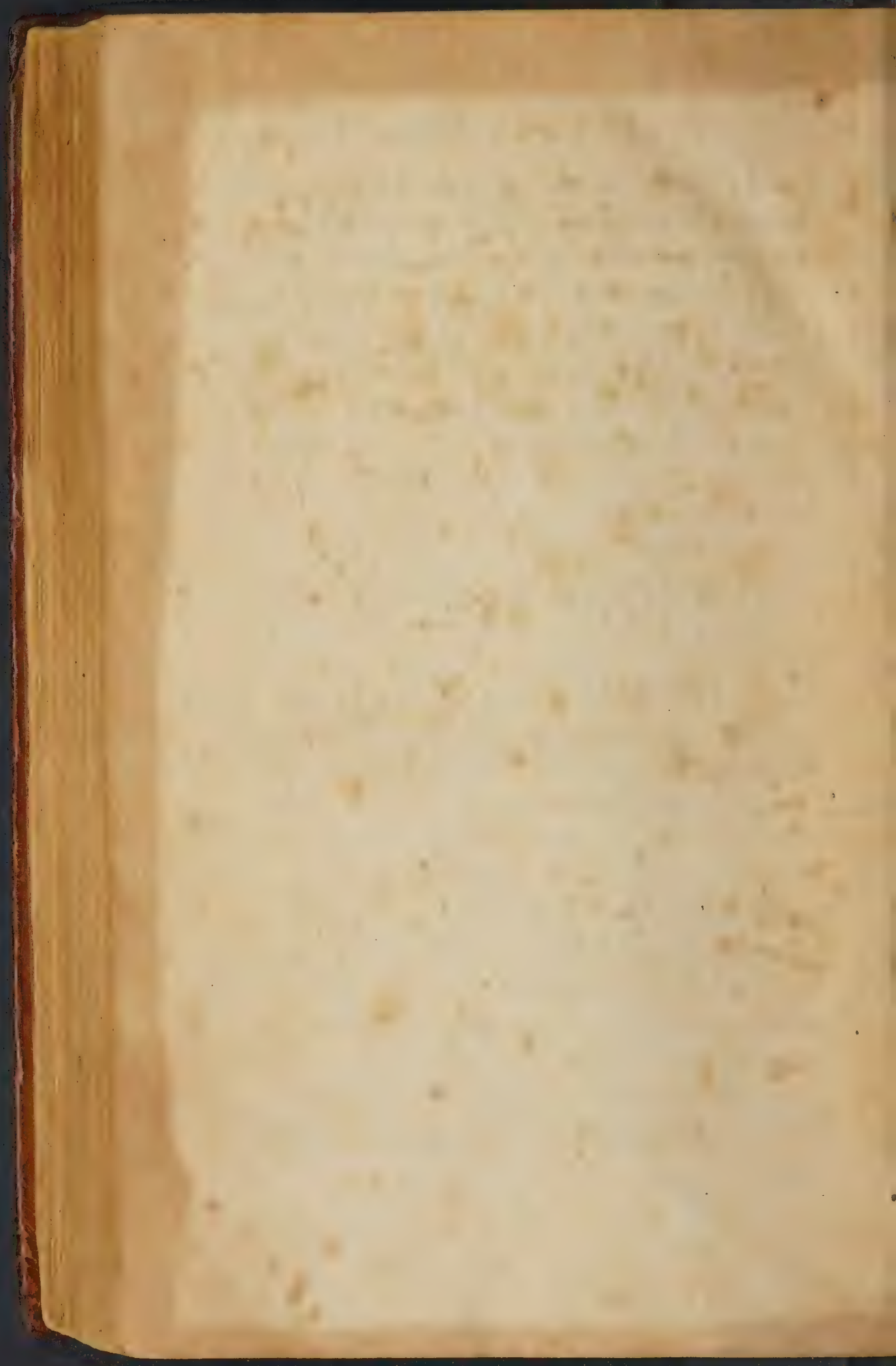
IN

IN a word: If we would consult our own happiness; if we would be reconciled with the constitution and administration of nature; if we would promote the noblest ends of our being; let us embrace that system of divine truth which alone can put us in possession of wisdom, perfection, and felicity. I am,

DEAR SIR,

With the highest esteem,

Your most obedient humble servant.



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